

Cop on polio duty injured
F.P. Report

TANK: A policeman got injured when unknown assailants opened fire on a polio team in Shah-Alam village of Tank on Wednesday. According to a police spokesman, the police team was guarding a polio team when terrorists attacked them in Shah-Alam village by opening indiscriminate firing. As a result, one policeman named Zahid got injured.



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ASTANA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif meeting with President of Russia, Vladimir Putin.

Ex-senator among four killed in Bajaur blast

F.P. Report

KHAR: Former senator Hidayatullah Khan along with three others were killed in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast in Bajaur on Wednesday.

Malakand Regional Police Officer Muhammad Ali Khan Gandapur confirmed the deaths and, said that the former senator's car was targeted in an IED attack in Bajaur's Damadola area. He told reporters that no one had claimed responsibility for the attack as of yet.

Bajaur District Police Officer Sajjad Ahmad said that the bomb disposal unit was conducting its investigation and the situation would be made clearer after its report. He added that the former senator was on the way to a by-election campaign in Damadola where he was attacked.

KP Chief Minister Ali Amin Gandapur condemned the incident and summoned a report from police authorities. All aspects of the incident should be investigated and a report should be submitted, he said.

KP government spokesperson Barrister Mohammad Ali Saif offered prayers for the deceased and said: "Such cowardly attacks cannot dampen our spirits." KP Chief Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry condemned the attack, saying that it was very unfortunate. "We will not be dis-

couraged by such cowardly attacks. The martyrdom of the former senator and others will not go in vain," he said, extending his condolences to the relatives of the three.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the death of Hidayatullah, a former Senator, and three other persons in Damadola, Bajaur blast.

The prime minister prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with equanimity, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. He also directed for identification of those responsible for the terrorist incident leading to exemplary punishment. While condemning the incident in the strongest words, the prime minister said that terrorist elements were the enemies of law and order and democracy, but could not deter the resolve of the Pakistani nation. He also reiterated the resolve to eliminate the specter of terrorism from the country.

President Asif Ali Zardari has expressed his deep grief and sorrow over the deaths of former Senator Hidayatullah and other people who lost their lives in a remote-controlled bomb blast in Bajaur.

While strongly condemning the terrorist incident, the president

expressed condolences with the bereaved families, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release. President Zardari also prayed for the departed souls and for the bereaved families to bear the losses with fortitude.

Chairman Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has strongly condemned the remote-controlled bomb attack on the vehicle of former Senator Hidayatullah Khan in Bajaur district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of three individuals, including the former senator.

In a statement issued by the Media Cell Bilawal House, Chairman PPP conveyed his heartfelt condolences and solidarity with the families of those martyred in the tragic incident in the Dama Dola area of Bajaur district. "I share the grief of the families of the victims and can understand the pain of losing their loved ones at the hands of terrorists," he stated.

Chairman Bhutto Zardari emphasized that eliminating the menace of terrorism from Pakistan should be the unanimous agenda of all democratic parties in the country. He reaffirmed the PPP's commitment to supporting efforts to eradicate terrorism and ensure the safety and security of all citizens.

JI announces 'Haq do Awaam ko' movement

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Jamat-i-Islami emir Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman on Wednesday announced to start "Haq do Awaam ko" movement. Speaking at a press conference in Islamabad, the JI chief said that his party would start a "historical sit-in" the capital against the government to raise voice for a common man who, he said, was suffering the most from recently passed budget. He said that the JI would lodge its protest alone as other parties were full of deep splits.

He censured the government for oppressing the salaries class in the budget. "I want to ask Shehbaz Sharif why he hasn't imposed taxes on landlords. We want to ask you why you aren't blocking the SIMs of landlords and only blocking those of masses," he bemoaned. He lamented that people were giving taxes on everything, adding that the government was dropping bomb on the masses in form of electricity bills.

Speaking about deteriorating security situation in country, the JI chief deplored that now people were left to fend for themselves. He castigated the government for hoodwinking farmers and leaving them in the lurch. He demanded imposition of taxes on landlords owning more than 100 acres of land. He asked the government to abdicate privileges given to ruling elite, urging that sacrifices should be given by elite instead of masses.

Pak-US holds military drills

F.P. Report

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan-US Joint Infanry Rifle Company Exchange Exercise-2024 is a bilateral joint exercise in Counter Terrorism domain to exchange tactical skills at combating menace of terrorism at sub unit level.

Two weeks long exercise commenced on 29 June 2024 at National Counter Terrorism Centre, Pabbi with participation of Infanry companies from both sides. The exercise is aimed at sharing Counter Terrorism experiences besides refining drills procedures vital for Counter Terrorism operations.

The scope of Exercise envisages attaining marksmanship skills during urban warfare by understanding best practices adopted at sub unit level. The inaugural event was witnessed by General Officer Commanding Kharian Garrison.

Govt to shut down PSM

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has decided to shut down Pakistan Steel Mills (PSM), a state-owned enterprise that has been incurring heavy losses for years.

In a statement on Wednesday, Secretary of Industry and Production said that the Sindh government has been offered to take over 700 acres of the total 19,000 acres land of the PSM and establish its own steel plant on the site. Last year, the secretary claimed, they found out that there was no buyer for the Pakistan Steel Mills. "Apart from 700 acres, the land will be used for industrial purposes", he added.

Meanwhile, Chief Financial Officer (CFO) Arif Sheikh claimed that the federal government has decided to close down PSM due to its poor performance and financial losses. The mill, which was established in 1974, has been facing financial difficulties for the past decade. The CFO claimed that the volume of PSM employees' annual salary is Rs3.1 billion and in the last 10 years, the government has paid Rs32 billion in salaries.

Shehbaz, Putin agree to boost trade, relations

ASTANA (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday met with Russian President Vladimir Putin wherein he emphasised the expansion of bilateral cooperation between Pakistan and Russia across all areas of mutual benefit including trade, energy, defence and security.

In the meeting held on the sidelines of Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Council of Head of States meeting, the prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to work with Russia to further expand and strengthen the growing multi-dimensional cooperation between the two countries.

During the 'warm and cordial' meeting, the two leaders had a wide ranging exchange of views covering bilateral relations with a special focus on trade and economic relations, energy as well as important regional and global issues, a PM Office press release said. The prime minister, in his opening remarks at the outset of the meeting, said the bilateral trade stood at around \$1 billion which could be expanded by overcoming the financial and banking matters.

Prime Minister Shehbaz, who arrived here to attend the twin Summit of Shanghai Cooperation Organization Council of Heads of State (CHS) and SCO Plus summits, expressed his pleasure to meet the Russian leader and recalled their earlier interaction in Samarkand. He congratulated President Putin on his re-election and expressed the hope that the Russian Federation would achieve further progress under his leadership.

The prime minister highlighted the importance

Pakistan attached to its relations with Russia and expressed satisfaction at the steady growth of those relations, which were characterized by mutual trust and understanding. He said that the bilateral relations were on a positive trajectory since last several years.

He expressed his readiness to work closely with the Russian president to further cement bilateral ties and viewed that both the countries had lot to do by benefiting from President Putin's experience and leadership. He thanked the Russian government for sending an oil shipment to Pakistan in the recent past and expressed the desire to move further in this regard.

He said that Pakistan-Russia ties were not driven or impacted by any geopolitical situation as both the countries had very old business relations. He recalled the barter trade between two countries during the decades of 50s to 70s when Pakistan used to import machinery from Russia and export leather and other commodities to Russia.

According to the statement, both sides agreed to convene the next meeting of the Pakistan-Russia intergovernmental Cooperation at Moscow at an early date. Prime Minister Shehbaz also extended an invitation to the Russian President Putin to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his earliest convenience.

In his remarks, President Putin also mentioned their earlier interaction in Samarkand on the sidelines of SCO summit in which they had discussed the ways to further improve bilateral relations. He said that Pakistan and Russia

enjoyed cordial relations which had improved due to the trade linkages. He said both countries could enhance their cooperation in energy and agriculture and expressed his readiness to promote cooperation with Pakistan in the field of food security.

Pakistan, Tajikistan reaffirm commitment to promote economic ties, explore new avenues for cooperation: Pakistan and Tajikistan have reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing the longstanding fraternal ties and increase bilateral economic cooperation by exploring new avenues, opportunities and ventures.

The bilateral relations were discussed during the official visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to the Republic of Tajikistan on July 2-3 at the invitation of Emomali Rahmon, the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, according to a joint statement issued following the visit. In order to strengthen trade relations, both parties also committed to exploring the possibility of granting preferential market access to each other's goods, including through discussions on a Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA).

Emphasizing the significance of enhancing road, rail, and air connectivity between the two nations, they agreed to conduct expert-level consultations on the matter. Underlining the importance of reliable electricity supply for sustainable economic growth, the two sides reaffirmed their commitment for early completion of the flagship power project CASA-1000.

(Continued on Back Page)

Six dead as floods inundate India, BD

DHAKA (INP): Six people have been killed in floods precipitated by torrential rains across northeast India and neighbouring Bangladesh that inundated the homes of more than a million others, officials said Wednesday.

Monsoon rains cause widespread destruction every year, but experts say climate change is shifting weather patterns and increasing the number of extreme weather events. Disaster authorities in India's northeastern state of Assam said four people had died over the past day, bringing the number of people killed there over successive downpours since mid-May to 38.

In Bangladesh, landslides triggered by heavy monsoon rains killed two people including a Rohingya refugee early on Wednesday, police commander Jahirul Hoque Bhuiyan told AFP. Bhuiyan said authorities in Bangladesh's vast relief camps -- home to around a million Rohingya refugees from neighbouring Myanmar -- had relocated some inhabitants to safety.

The worst flooding took place in northeastern Sylhet division, where top government bureaucrat Abu Ahmed Siddique said more than 1.3 million people had been affected. "Their villages and roads and most of their homes have been inundated by flood water," Abu Ahmed Siddique, the government administrator of Sylhet region, told media.

Kamrul Hasan, the secretary of Bangladesh's disaster management ministry, said that rivers had swelled after rain upstream in India. Much of low-lying Bangladesh is made up of deltas as the Himalayan rivers of the Ganges and Brahmaputra slowly wind towards the sea after coursing through India.

Tough budget a stepping stone for IMF programme

KARACHI (Reuters): Pakistan is looking to clinch a staff-level agreement on an International Monetary Fund (IMF) bailout of more than \$6 billion this month after addressing all of the lender's requirements in its annual budget, its junior finance minister told Reuters.

The South Asian country has set challenging revenue targets in its annual budget to help it win approval from the IMF for a loan to stave off another economic meltdown, even as domestic anger rises at new taxation measures. "We hope to culminate this (IMF) process in the next three to four weeks," Minister of State for Finance, Revenue and Power Ali Pervaiz Malik said on Wednesday, with the aim of thrashing out a staff-level agreement before the IMF board recess.

"I think it will be north of \$6 billion," he said of the size of the package, though he added at this point the IMF's validation was primary focus.

KP CM directs implementation of monsoon contingency plan

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sardar Ali Amin Khan Gandapur has directed the concerned provincial departments and district administrations to ensure implementation of the Monsoon Contingency Plan of the provincial government and to remain high alert at all times in order to effectively deal with any untoward situation across the province.

In his special directives, issued here on Wednesday in this regard, the Chief Minister said that the monsoon contingency plan is mainly aimed at safeguarding the lives and properties of the

people, minimizing the disaster risks and ensuring swift and accurate response to any emergency due to expected rains in the current monsoon season.

"All the tiers of disaster management and relief activities would have to play their proactive role in this regard," he said and directed the authorities concerned to strictly follow the guidelines laid down by the PDMA to this effect, adding that all the prerequisites should be completed in all respects to reduce the disaster risks and damages to the public life and properties across the province.

He also directed them to

ensure all time availability of the required manpower, machinery, relief items and medical teams along with necessary medicines with special focus on the most vulnerable areas of the province as they need to have extraordinary arrangements and rapid response mechanisms to deal with any emergency in an effective manner. CM further directed the quarters concerned to devise an effective mechanism of coordination among the relevant departments and rescue agencies, adding that control rooms should be established at provincial level and high-risk districts in the province for this purpose.



KHAR: People shifting bodies of Bajaur bomb blast victims towards hospital.

Imran, Qureshi, others acquitted in protest case

F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad's district and session court has acquitted the former PM and Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan and former foreign minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi and other PTI leaders accused in a case registered at Abpara police station.

The court announced the reserved verdict on the acquittal pleas filed by PTI founder Imran Khan and Judicial Magistrate Yasir Mehmood acquitted Imran Khan, PTI leaders including Shah Mahmood Qureshi, Sheikh Rashid, Shehryar Afridi, Faisal Javed, Raja Khuram Nawaz, Ali Nawaz Awan and Asad Qaiser.

Sardar Masroof Khan and Ansar Kiyani representing Imran Khan, Sheikh Rashid and others presented the arguments in the case. It is pertinent to note that Imran Khan, Shah Mahmood, Faisal Javed and others booked for protest in Abpara police station against Election

Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) decision.

Meanwhile, days after differences between multiple factions of the former ruling party (Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf) became stark with open criticism of one and other, party founder Imran Khan, in an apparent attempt to clear the air, denied claims of any cracks in his party. "There are neither major differences among the party leaders nor is there any forward bloc," the former prime minister said.

The PTI founder, however, conceded the division within the ranks of the PTI by stating that he would talk to both groups of the party in the upcoming meeting on July 4. Speaking to reporters in a makeshift court inside Adiala Jail, where he and his wife were presented for proceedings in the 190 million corruption reference in which former first lady got bail, he said questions were being asked on transparency of Feb 8 elections in both local and international media, adding that the

recent US resolution was a case in point.

Asked if he considered the US resolution an 'interference' in internal matters of Pakistan like cipher, he said there was a difference in raising questions on electoral transparency and 'threatening' a regime change. He also lambasted the government for rebuffing the resolution, insisting that it was high time to look inwards instead of pointing fingers at someone.

He also took potshots at the government for making people's lives miserable by burdening them with endless taxes. He stressed that only a fresh and transparent election with a trustworthy government backed by public mandate could help turn the corner of the economy, insisting that economy would flounder otherwise. Khan also whined about the treatment meted out to him by saying that former prime minister Nawaz Sharif was allowed to meet party leaders regularly in jail whereas he was not even given a blank paper.



Assembly enacted laws against gender-based violence, forced conversion: CM

KARACHI (APP): Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Wednesday highlighted the efforts of the Sindh Assembly in introducing laws aimed at implementing various innovative and citizen-centric initiatives, including capacity building of prosecutors and judiciary on laws related to gender-based violence, anti-rape measures, protection of minority rights, legislation on forced conversion and training of Sindh police in handling cases involving transgender individuals.

He made these remarks during the launch of the Sindh Prosecution Roadmap 2025-2030 at a local hotel. The program, organized by the Sindh Criminal Prosecution Services Department in collaboration with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), was attended by lawyers, civil society members, provincial secretaries, and diplomats.

Murad Shah said that the PPP believed in upholding the rule of law at the national level and has provided the constitutional framework for the country. He added that the Sindh Assembly has played a crucial role in enacting a variety of innovative and citizen-centric initiatives aimed at promoting justice and equality.

The CM said that one notable

achievement was the enactment of Sindh Correction Services, making the Sindh Assembly the first legislative assembly to adopt significant jail reforms in Asia. Additionally, the Sindh Criminal Prosecution Service Department has been actively participating in national causes, with the PG Sindh serving as a national legal expert on FATF.

Shah said that his government has also organized meetings of the Pakistan Prosecution Forum (PPF) in collaboration with provincial chapters, with the recent 19th meeting hosted by the Federal PG in Karachi. He disclosed that the Sindh Road Map 2025-2030, developed with the support of UNODC, was a pioneering study that identified gaps and challenges in the Criminal Justice System regarding the rights of transgender persons, trafficking in persons, and the rights of minorities.

The launch of the Sindh Roadmap 2025-2030 marks a significant step forward in advancing ongoing rule of law reforms to the next level. "Let us continue to work together and leverage our collective expertise to implement the Sindh Prosecution Roadmap and deliver a fair and equitable justice system to serve the people of Sindh and Pakistan," he said.

The CM commended the dedica-

tion and commitment of the Sindh Criminal Prosecution Service Department to empowering the prosecution system to deliver fair and just outcomes. He expressed the government's commitment to a transparent and equitable justice system in Sindh through the Prosecution Roadmap.

The CM thanked the UNODC for their relentless support and technical guidance in shaping a citizen-centric and inclusive roadmap aimed at enhancing the performance of the prosecutorial system in Sindh over the next five years. He emphasized the need to remain focused on translating the vision into a strong prosecution service in Sindh through measurable, objective, and actionable steps.

Shah stressed the importance of executing relevant policy and governance reforms to achieve evidence-based decision-making. Furthermore, he expressed confidence in the institutions and the technical support provided by UNODC, citing their global practice and experiential knowledge in executing similar roadmap projects.

Those who spoke on the occasion include Minister for Agriculture & Anti-Corruption Establishment Sardar Mohammad Bux Mahar, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Dr Jeremy Mison and Mr Zia Hashmi of UNODC, PG Dr Fiaz Shah, and others.



KARACHI: Deputy Speaker of the New York State Assembly, Mr. Phillip Ramos talking to media persons during his visit to Karachi Press Club. —APP Photo

CM chairs meeting to regulate market prices of flour

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday chaired a special meeting to regulate the market price of flour.

She called the data on market price of flour. She expressed displeasure at presenting wrong data on flour price by the Food Department, as it differed from the actual market rates of flour.

The CM ordered to determine the price of flour according to the category of Pakistan Standards & Quality Control. She directed the relevant authorities to present a daily report on the market price of flour.

The CM decided in principle to allow transportation of flour with permission. She also ordered to restructure the Food Department, saying that legal action must be

ensured against the corrupt elements. She ordered to create digital monitoring mechanism for the officers and officials of the Food Department. "Mafias are doing their work and departments are sleeping. How will governance improve if departments do not do their work". She noted, "Farmers have sold their wheat, now I will not allow mafias to exploit people."

Earlier, the CM was briefed that Punjab had official wheat reserves of 2.2 million metric tonnes, while a total of 6 million metric tonnes of wheat is available in Punjab. There is more than sufficient wheat in the province. Geo-tagging of the wheat reserves is being done to check hoarding.

Senator Pervaiz Rashid, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb, Information & Culture

Minister Azma Zahid Bukhari, Provincial Ministers Bilal Yasin and Syed Ashiq Hussain attended the meeting. Chief secretary, secretaries and other officers concerned were also present.

CM urges public support for plastic bag ban: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif urged citizens to support the government in ensuring implementation of the law banning the production, sale, and use of plastic bags. In her message on World Plastic Bag Free Day, the CM said "Today we renew our commitment to end the use of plastic bags in Punjab".

The CM emphasised that plastic pollution poses a major environmental threat and urged for decisive action to tackle this issue. "Our aim is to create a plastic-free Punjab, where our

rivers, parks, and cities are free from plastic pollution" she stressed.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said the 'No to Plastic' campaign aims to reduce plastic waste and promote sustainable alternatives, adding "By limiting the use of plastic, we can ensure a clean and healthy environment for future generations."

The chief minister said use biodegradable bags instead of urban plastic bags, adding that harmful effects of plastic on our health and environment cannot be ignored.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif said adopting eco-friendly alternatives can significantly reduce the environmental impact. She highlighted the 'No to Plastic' campaign thanks government officials, environmental activists, and the public.

Appeal for Protection Kohat resident accuses Provincial Assembly Member of threats

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Janib Khan Afridi, a resident of Peli Tan area in Kohat, has made a heartfelt appeal to state authorities for protection for himself and his children from alleged threats by provincial assembly member Dawoud Shah Afridi and his associates.

Addressing a press conference at the Peshawar Press Club, Afridi expressed concern over the safety of his family and called for action against

officials from the Peli Tan police station and SHO for their alleged misconduct.

Afridi accused his brother Dawoud Shah Afridi, a member of the provincial assembly representing Kohat under the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) ticket, and his other brother Hussain Shah Afridi of issuing threats against his children.

He claimed that when he attempted to lodge a First Information Report (FIR) against them, the SHO reportedly refused to regis-

ter it and instead, law enforcement officials allegedly seized his property, including his CNG pump station.

Afridi also alleged severe violence against himself and his children, citing CCTV footage cleared by the SHO of Peli Tan as evidence. He has urged the Peshawar Corps Commander, government and other responsible officers to take note of the alleged hooliganism by Dawoud Shah MPA and Hussain Shah Afridi.



World Bank delegation calls on LG Minister

LAHORE (APP): A World Bank delegation headed by Senior Water Supply and Sanitation Specialist Mohammad Farhanullah Sami called on Punjab Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafique at the Civil Secretariat, here on Wednesday.

Secretary Local Government Shakeel Ahmed Mian, P&D Chief Officer Ahmed Rajwana and Special Secretary Asia Gul also attended the meeting. During the meeting, progress in the Punjab Rural Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation Project (PRSWSSP) was discussed.

The provincial minister informed the delegation about the various projects of the government and said that PRSWSSP was a very good project of the World Bank under which all facilities were being provided to 200 villages of 16 tehsils of

Punjab.

He expressed his satisfaction over the fact that the world bank had expressed its willingness to extend the scope of these facilities to 2 thousand villages of the same tehsils. Zeeshan Rafique said that the expansion of the scope of the World Bank program will benefit more population.

"The World Bank's support in issues like clean water, sanitation, stunting in villages is commendable", he praised. He said that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif wanted to implement a uniform sanitation system throughout Punjab. "For this purpose, the Punjab government is outsourcing the solid waste management system", he said. The Local Government Minister said that if possible, the World Bank should spend the special funds for sanitation under PRSWSSP

for other facilities.

On this occasion, Secretary Local Government Shakeel Ahmed Mian said that the experience of the pilot project should be extended by the World Bank to other areas as well. "Reaching a larger population may yield better results", he observed.

The head of the World Bank delegation, Farhanullah Sami, while appreciating the performance of the PRSWSSP pilot program under the supervision of the Punjab government, indicated that the World Bank would start Punjab Rural Support Program 2 in the future.

He said that he agreed with the words of the provincial minister to benefit the larger population. "Proposals in this regard will be sent to the World Bank's Board, which will take the final decision", he said.

Green electric meters not banned: LESCO

LAHORE (APP): Lahore Electric Supply Company (LESCO) has refuted the news reports regarding ban on Green Electricity Meters.

The LESCO spokesman clarified in a media statement here Wednesday that the company has not taken any such decision to ban the green meters. He, however, added that for the convenience of consumers, the NOC (No Objection Certificate) of AMI meters (Advanced Metering Infrastructure) would be issued instead of green meters. He explained that installation of AMI meters would solve the problem of over-billing for consumers, besides helping in decreasing the incidence of power theft.

The spokesman also clarified that due to closure of LESCO's I-Con Valley feeder for repair works, electricity supply was cut off in some areas of Arayan. He mentioned that advance notification of power outages was given through advertisements in newspapers. The power supply remained suspended from 7am to 11:40am in the said areas. LESCO apologizes for the inconvenience caused to its customers, he said.

Mobile dental camp set up at Camp Jail

LAHORE (APP): The health department set up a mobile dental camp at the Camp Jail for a complete examination, screening and treatment of 6,326 under trial prisoners.

Senior Superintendent Prisons, Camp Jail Zaheer Ahmad Virk told APP here

Wednesday that a team of dental surgeons assisted by paramedical staff had started examination and screening of all prisoners. He said this unprecedented move marks a historic moment in the long history of Camp Jail, reflecting a commitment to the health and well-being of inmates by IG Prisons Punjab Mian Farooq Nazeer.

He said under the Chief Minister's directive, the Health Department had mobilized resources and deployed a team of qualified dental professionals equipped with modern dental equipment to the jail. The camp offers a range of dental services, from basic dental check-ups and cleanings to more complex procedures such as fillings, extractions, and treatment of oral infections.

K Electric to reduce load-shedding timing within few days: Nasir

KARACHI (APP): Provincial Energy Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah on Wednesday claimed that K Electric would reduce load shedding across Karachi in the next few days.

The K Electric was trying to reduce load shedding timing specially, during night and peak hours in the hot day to provide relief to the people, the minister said while talking to media on the occasion of MoU signing ceremony between Sindh Transmission and Dispatch Company (STDC), K Electric and NSCL here at the office of Sindh Energy department.

Nasir Shah said that K Electric through STDC, will supply 40 megawatts of electricity to National Steel Complex through 132 KV transmission line. The energy minister said this project also includes the construction of 132 KV transmission line.

Chief Executive Officer STDC Muhammad Salim Shaikh, CEO NSCL Zaigham Adil Rizvi and CEO K-Electric Monis Abdullah Alvi signed the MoU to lay transmission line of 40 megawatts electricity from Pipri Grid Station to NSCL located at Port Qasim Authority.

Syed Nasir Shah said that the proj-

ect will increase the confidence of private investors in the STDC and Energy Department Government of Sindh to develop projects that will benefit Sindh province by creating jobs and boosting the economy.

The STDC is the first Provincial Grid Company (PGC) license holder with the mandate to develop electric power transmission infrastructure of 132 KV and above.

On this occasion, CEO STDC Muhammad Salim Shaikh said that on June 13, MoU was signed between STDC and GO Energy for Pakistan's first 500 MW floating solar power project in collaboration with Department of Alternative Energy and Department of Irrigation. He said the STDC will lay 220 kv transmission line from Kenjar Lake Power Project to K-Electric Dhabaji Grid Station Karachi, adding that the K Electric would get 500 MW of power from the floating solar power project. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2026. Similarly, he said on June 15, 2024, MoU was signed between STDC and Gul Ahmed Group for construction of 132kV transmission line from identi-

fied power plant location in Jhampir Wind Corridor to Gul Ahmed Group in Landhi area.

The Department of Alternative Energy has already procured land (524 acres and 558 acres) in Jhampir Area Wind Corridor for this purpose. STDC will lay 60 km long transmission line from Jhampir power plant site to Landhi area for transmission of 100 MW wind power. This project is based on B2B. The project is expected to be completed by the end of 2027.

Furthermore, the Government of Sindh is committed to accelerating the use of renewable resources and is working hard to reduce the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) overall basket tariff and make it affordable for the common people of the country. Apart from tariff reduction, renewable energy will also contribute to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals to create a clean, reliable and sustainable environment. Provincial Minister Saeed Ghani, Sindh Energy Secretary Mussadiq Ahmed Khan and other senior officers were also present on the occasion.

126th anniversary of Philippines' independence celebrated



F.P. Report

KARACHI: A ceremony was held at the Karachi Arts Council to commemorate the 126th anniversary of Philippine Independence and the 75th year of Pakistan-Philippines bilateral relations.

The event was attended by notable figures including Culture Minister Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah,

Ambassador Maria Agnes M. Cervantes, Honorary Consul General Dr. Imran Yousuf, and President of the Arts Council Ahmed Shah, along with other consular officials.

The celebration highlighted the enduring friendship and cooperation between the Philippines and Pakistan, which have maintained diplomatic relations since 1949.

The event featured speeches, cultural performances, and a reaffirmation of the strong ties between the two nations. This year's theme for the Philippine Independence Day celebrations was "Kalayaan, Kinabukasan, Kasaysayan" (Freedom, Tomorrow, History), emphasizing the historical significance and future aspirations of the Filipino people.

Volunteers delegation visits PSCA

LAHORE (APP): A delegation of volunteers in the police programme conducted a study visit to the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) here on Tuesday.

According to details, the delegation comprised students from 138 different universities.

Shift Commander DSP briefed the delegation about the workings of "Virtual Women Police Station." The students were informed about the '15 Emergency Call Centre', the 15 panic button, and the Women's Safety App's live chat feature.

Briefing the delegation, it was explained that issues faced by women, including harassment, were being resolved on priority basis. Modern technology is being utilized to ensure the safety of women in the Safe City.

The delegates stated that the steps taken by Safe City for the protection of women were commendable. It is encouraging to see a large number of women seeking help from the Virtual Women Police Station.

SUIT ADVERTISEMENT

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar
Case No: 78/1of 2024 Date of hearing 12-08-2024. Suit for the Recovery of Rs.1154806.46 HBL Dir Branch Dir Vs: Ijaz Khan
Notice Versus: Ijaz Khan son of Gul sattu R/o:- Tamab road, Post office Gulshanabad, Khat Korova, District Charsadda. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.1154806.46 Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspaper. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs.
Issued today on 02-07-2024 under my signature and seal of the Court.
Registrar | Banking Court,1 Peshawar

SUIT ADVERTISEMENT

In the Court of Miss Ambareen Navid Judge Banking Court-1 Peshawar Federal Judicial Complex, Phase-7 Hayatabad Peshawar
Case No: 77/1 of 2024 Date of hearing 12-08-2024. Suit for the Recovery of Rs.2042125.22 HBL Nawagai Branch Buner Vs: Said Shabir Ahmad.
Notice Versus: Said Shabir Ahmad son of Amir Jawad shah, R/o:- Mohallah Akazai, Post Office Nawagai, Tehsil Mandran, District Buner. Where as the plaintiff bank has instituted a suit for the recovery of Rs.2042125.22 Against you under section 10(2) of the Financial Institution (Recovery of Finance) Ordinance 2001, you are hereby summoned to obtain leave of the court to appear and defend the suit within 30 days after receipt/ publication of the notice in the newspaper. Failing which an ex-parte decree shall be passed in favour of the plaintiff Bank with costs.
Issued today on 02-07-2024 under my signature and seal of the Court.
Registrar | Banking Court,1 Peshawar

PHC directs UOP to respond on contempt plea within 7 days

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) directed University of Peshawar (UOP) to respond to a contempt of court petition filed by Professor Dr. Mehnas Majeed within 7 days, on Wednesday.

The petitioner, Professor Dr. Mehnas Majeed had applied for the post of Associate Professor, but despite meeting the required qualifications, her name was not included in the selection board's list. The court had previously ordered the university to include her name in the list within two months, but the university administration failed to comply with the court's orders even after five months.

The petitioner's counsel, Tariq Afghan advocate argued that UOP administration had violated the court's orders and had not included his client's name in the selection board's list despite his eligibility.

The petitioner has requested the court to initiate contempt proceedings against the university administration for violating the court's orders. PHC's divisional comprising of Justice SM Attique Shah and Justice Ijaz Sabi directed UOP to respond to the contempt of court petition within 7 days.

PHC orders Federal govt for assistance regarding jurisdiction of Special judge plea

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A divisional bench comprising of Chief Justice Peshawar High Court (PHC) Justice Ishtiaq Ibrahim instructed the federal government to assist the court in determining whether the Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court has jurisdiction to hear appeals against the decisions of the Magistrate.

PHC issued the orders during hearing of Assistant Director Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Shahid Ilyas plea against the registration of a case against him and the trial court's decision to record statements of witnesses.

The petition argued that the case against him is baseless and that the trial court's decision to record statements of witnesses is unlawful. The case was registered against him in 2017 for allegedly recovering a large sum of money, but the trial court's decision to record statements of witnesses was made without following the proper legal procedure.

Additional Attorney General Sana Ullah argued that the case against the petitioner is valid.

He also stated that the trial court's decision to record statements of witnesses was made in accordance with the law and that the petitioner's arguments are without merit.

Peshawar High Court adjourned the hearing and directed the parties to argue on the legal point of whether the Special Judge Anti-Corruption Court has the authority to hear appeals against the decisions of the Magistrate.

The court also instructed the federal government to assist in determining this legal point.



PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to KP CM on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Abdul Karim Tordher talking to Farrukh Toirov, Provincial Head and Deputy Country Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO).

AKU, US Mission celebrate Climate Action Fellows in KP



F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: The Aga Khan University Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED), in collaboration with the U.S. Consulate in Peshawar, honoured its Climate Action Fellows and showcased their groundbreaking action plans at an event in Chitral, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). The top 10 plans will receive funding for implementation, a significant step towards creating a more sustainable and resilient future. This marks a significant milestone in the "Raise Awareness and Inspire Action on Environmental Protection" project.

KP is inhabited by 30 million people and is categorized by hot summers and mild winters in the southern part and extreme cold climate in the northern part. Climate change has intensified extreme events like forest fires, water scarcity, sanitation issues, and urban flooding in the province. Furthermore, the rapid melting of ice and snow caps, along with erratic weather events, is severely impacting agriculture and livelihoods. The project, running from September 2023 to October 2024, aims to equip educators in KP with the knowledge and skills necessary to nurture a culture of environmental stewardship and inquiry-based learning, teachers are implementing action projects within their schools and communities, encouraging hands-on approaches to environmental education. "When I envisioned a long-term action fellowship for the climate crisis

through the training of teachers, I had little knowledge of the degree of awareness teachers held," said Dr Fozia Parveen, Assistant Professor and Project Lead at AKU-IED. "Their motivation, reflected in their willingness to participate in a non-stipendiary fellowship, their action plans, and their commitment to implementing these action plans, has also motivated me to do more work in the future. I hope that we can all bring about the much-needed systemic change required for a sustainable planet through collective action." The fellowship received an overwhelming response with 500 applications, out of which 50 exceptional educators were selected through a rigorous process. The programme commenced with a series of workshops in Chitral and Peshawar, training teachers

to lead climate change education and sustainability efforts. These workshops laid the foundation for ongoing mentorship and support as fellows developed and implemented their action plans.

U.S. Consul General Peshawar Shante Moore said the AKU-IED partnership underscores the U.S. commitment to environmental protection and education in KP. "By empowering teachers, we are fostering a generation of environmentally conscious individuals who will drive positive change in their communities," he said. "Through the U.S. Embassy's Green Alliance initiative, we aim to create a more sustainable future."

One of the key elements of the project is the engagement of key stakeholders and policymakers in KP to support and promote climate change education. Mr Abdul Akram, Additional Secretary Education, Government of KP, remarked: "Teachers in our country hold the key to unlocking knowledge and a sustainable future. Through climate change education, they can motivate the next generation to act, innovate, and solve pressing environmental issues."

As the project progresses, AKU-IED remains dedicated to building a network of environmentally conscious educators. Through continuous support and collaborative efforts, this initiative aims to make a lasting impact on environmental protection and climate resilience in KP.

Various areas mostly in KP suitable for tea cultivation

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Various areas in Pakistan and especially in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are suitable for tea cultivation, which have identified a GIS-based survey.

This was told during a meeting of the Special Assistant to KP CM on Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Abdul Karim Tordher with Farrukh Toirov, Provincial Head and Deputy Country Representative of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), a subsidiary agency of United Nations here at Agricultural University Peshawar on Wednesday.

During meeting, the Special Assistant was briefed regarding the possibilities of tea cultivation and a comprehensive study conducted in this regard.

Besides, Director

Business Development, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Board of Investment and Trade (KPBoIT), Iqbal Sarwar, Manager Tourism Gul Muhammad was also present on this occasion.

They were told that Pakistan is the largest importer of tea in the world and imports 252,000 tons of tea every year and by the year 2031, the demand will increase to 317,000 tons.

According to the ground facts 271,406 acres of land could be purely utilized for tea cultivation of which most of the suitable locations are located in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

These suitable areas include Mansehra, Dir Upper, Dir Lower, Swat, Shangla, Kohistan Upper, Kohistan Lowe Kolai Palas, Batagram, Torghar, Abbottabad, Buner, Haripur, Malakand and Mardan. The utilization of the identified

areas has potential to produce 190,000 tons of tea annually, which is 75% of the current requirement of the country.

Speaking on the occasion, the Special Assistant termed the Special Assistant the technical study conducted by the international organization as very useful and beneficial, saying their priority is to develop this sector under the business model.

The Special Assistant said that on behalf of the provincial government they will make efforts to practically use this study. He said that we will talk to the agricultural authorities to take effective measures in this regard.

He added that similar comprehensive and technical study by the international organization will also be very useful for trout fish breeding.

Meeting discuss measures to prevent spread of dengue

PESHAWAR (APP): Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief Peshawar, Asghar Sorani on Wednesday chaired a meeting of District Dengue Prevention and Response Unit.

The meeting was attended by health department officials, line department representatives and field staff. The meeting reviewed dengue action plan and discussed measures taken to prevent dengue.

Meeting was informed that five dengue cases have been reported from Gulbahar No. 2, Jan Colony and Peshawar. So far 37 suspected dengue cases have been screened in Peshawar.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner directed that the source of dengue cases should be identified and larvae be eliminated to prevent further spread. He instructed the relevant officials and field staff to accelerate anti-dengue activities.

It was told that awareness campaigns, distribution of mosquito nets, mechanical sweeping, fogging, and IRS spraying have been carried out in various areas of the city. Meeting emphasized that all cases of dengue should be reported immediately to identify the source and to take preventive measures.

Farewell ceremony held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A farewell ceremony was held in honor of the transferred Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir, who was transferred from the Health Department. The ceremony was hosted by Health Minister Syed Qasim Ali Shah, and attended by Special Secretary Health, Additional Secretary, DG Health, Section Officers, and all staff members of the Health Department including Director Generals of attach formations. The Health Minister praised Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir for his outstanding services, saying that he played a key role in implementing reforms, controlling dengue, promoting the polio program, resolving administrative issues of attached departments, and efficiently managing the administrative affairs of the Health Department.

The Minister presented a souvenir to the outgoing Secretary Health, while the staff of the Health Department presented him a shield and a traditional turban. Secretary Health Mahmood Aslam Wazir thanked all the staff members, saying that they worked together as a team. He added that he worked day and night for the progress and betterment of the department.

ed his sympathies and best wishes for their speedy recovery.

"The incidents targeting polio teams are deeply tragic," stated Faisal Karim Kundi, emphasizing his dismay over the violence directed towards the vaccination efforts.

The Governor urged to ensure the uninterrupted continuation of polio vaccination campaigns in the province.

Meanwhile, Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nadeem Aslam Chaudhary has condemned Dama Dola blast and expressed grief over the loss of lives in the incident.

In a statement issued here, he said that these acts of cowardice could not deter our resolve and courage to fight enemies of the country.

He said that we share the grief of bereaved families in this hour of distress and added that sacrifices of guiltless people would not go vain and elements involved in the incident would be brought to court of law.

Governor flays blast in Bajaur



PESHAWAR (APP): Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday condemned the remote-control bomb blast in the Dama Dola area of Bajaur District, which resulted in the tragic loss of lives, including former Senator Hidayatullah Khan and three others.

Expressing heartfelt sorrow over the casualties, Governor Faisal Kundi extended his deepest condolences to the bereaved families, including the family of former Senator Hidayatullah Khan.

"In this moment of grief, our sympathies are

with the affected families. The tragic incident has deeply saddened me," remarked Governor Kundi.

He prayed for the departed souls to rest in peace and urged the affected families to find strength and patience in this difficult time.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Wednesday also strongly condemned the shooting incidents targeting police teams in Tank and D.I. Khan districts.

Expressing deep regret over the firing incidents that resulted in injuries to police constables, Governor Kundi extend-

Meeting of Dengue Prevention and Response Unit held

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: A meeting of the District Dengue Prevention and Response Unit was held under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner Relief Peshawar, Asghar Sorani.

The meeting reviewed the actions taken to prevent dengue in Peshawar. The meeting was attended by health department officials, line department representatives, and field staff.

The meeting was informed that five dengue cases have been reported from the same locality in Gulbahar No. 2, Jan Colony, Peshawar, including four members of the same family.

The affected individuals belong to the Afghan community, and four of them are children. So far, 37 suspected dengue cases have been screened in Peshawar.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner directed that the source of dengue cases should be identified and larvae be eliminated to prevent further spread.

He instructed the relevant officials and field staff to accelerate anti-dengue activities.

He was informed that awareness campaigns, distribution of mosquito nets, mechanical sweeping, fogging, and IRS spraying have been carried out in the area.

Asghar Sorani emphasized that no dengue case should be hidden, and all cases should be reported immediately to identify the source and take preventive measures.

Section 144 has already been imposed in Peshawar to prevent dengue.

Last year, 14 cases were reported in June, while this year, only five cases have been reported due to timely measures."

Three culprits of Badaber tragedy held, six still at large

PESHAWAR (INP): The police have important proceeding in Badaber tragedy it arrested three culprits involved in murder of eight people with

weapons while six are still at large. According to police officials, three accused of the incident were apprehended with arms during a

crackdown in Nowshera.

Father and sons were hiding in Nowshera after the murder and raids were being conducted for arrest of their six other accomplices.

The culprits had murdered eight family members including women and children over financial dispute.

Surge in gastro, diarrhea cases due to severe heat in KP

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa is experiencing a significant rise in gastro and diarrhea cases due to severe heat and humidity.

According to health department sources, as many as 25,996 affected individuals have been reported in various hospitals of the province during one week, with many suffering from severe dysentery.

Most of these cases have been reported from Peshawar, Swat, Charsadda, and Dera Ismail Khan, where the intense heatwave continues amid the worst power shedding.

The last week report of the health department indicated Peshawar with the highest number of affected people and 3,282 individuals were brought to its hospitals and medical centers. Swat reported 2,884 cases,

Charsadda 1,815, Dera Ismail Khan 1,698, Swabi 144, Lower Dir 128, Malakand 127, Bajaur 120, Nowshera 1,186, and Mardan 1,060 cases.

The health department has urged the public to take precautionary measures during this severe heat-wave, drink plenty of water, and consume clean food to prevent diseases like gastro and diarrhea.



In brief

Five die in road mishap

BHAKKAR (INP): In a most horrific incident, five people were killed while nine were seriously wounded when two vehicles collided with each other near Mankera on Jhang-Bhakkar road on Wednesday. The accident took place when the driver of one of the vehicles dozed off. According to reports, the accident was so severe that five people died on the spot. The injured were shifted to the THQ Hospital, Mankera and DHQ Hospital, Bhakkar.

Quetta Safe City Project hailed

QUETTA (PPI): Minister for Home, Mir Ziaullah Langove, on Wednesday said completion of Quetta Safe City project was the biggest challenge for the government. These views were expressed by him during visit to the Command and Control Centre of Quetta Safe City Project. He said the purpose of the project was to root out crimes and apprehend criminals, adding that Quetta Safe City Project would prove to be beneficial for the people and a means of protection. He said it was the foremost priority of the government to protect the lives and properties of people by utilising all the resources, adding that besides security forces, civilians had also been targeted in the war against terrorism. He said that Quetta Safe City Project would prove to be helpful to wipe out terrorism, adding that QSCP was increasing the capacity building of law enforcement agencies. Chief Operating Officer, Quetta Safe City Project, gave detailed briefing about the project. On the occasion, Inspector General of Police Balochistan, Abdul Khaliq Sheikh and others were also present.

2 new bridges being built

SIALKOT (APP): Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Zulqarnain has said that two new bridges are being constructed at a cost of Rs. 80 million on Nullah Bhed, passing through the city. Under the supervision of Pakistan Public Works Department, the contractor had been directed to speed up work to ensure construction of the bridges before the given timeline in the public interest and continuous monitoring is being done to ensure speed as well as quality of the project. He said this while reviewing the ongoing work on the construction of bridges near Cantonment Plaza and General Bus Stand on Nullah Bhed. The DC said construction of the bridge, along the Cantonment Plaza, would provide a lift-free facility for the traffic coming from the city to move forward the Khawaja Safdar Road and similarly, the construction of the bridge at General Bus Stand would provide easy access to the residents of Prem Nagar and Nasir Road on Khawaja Safdar Road and reduce traffic pressure on Khadim Ali Road and Kutchehry Road. Later, DC Muhammad Zulqarnain reviewed the ongoing work for rehabilitation of Pasrur Road green-belts. CO District Council Ulfat Shehzad gave a briefing to the deputy commissioner about planting saplings on the greenbelts of Pasrur Road during monsoon. Earlier, the DC also inspected the ongoing work for redesigning and upgrading the building of Social Welfare Complex Sialkot and directed the Building Department to increase the speed of work. Meanwhile, DC Muhammad Zulqarnain also inspected revamping project of Government Sardar Begum Teaching Hospital.



KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate chairing a meeting regarding developmental projects.

Monsoon rains for parts of Balochistan forecasted

F.P. Report

QUETTA: The weather department on Wednesday said that heavy rains were expected in Naseerabad, Sibbi and Lasbela divisions of Balochistan during the next 24 hours as a new monsoon system would enter the province today.

The department also forecast rains for the upper parts of the country and areas of Sindh Mithi, Badin, Umakot, Tharparkar and Mirpurkhas during the aforementioned period, saying strong monsoon currents from the Bay of Bengal and the Arabian Sea were entering these areas via India.

In view of torrential rains predicted for different parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), especially for the upper areas of the province from today, the provincial Tourism Department urged people to avoid going to hilly areas.

In a statement, it said that heavy rains could result in landslides in mountainous areas, so tourists were advised to stay safe.

On the other hand, Chief Meteorologist Sardar Sarfaraz said that Karachi would receive the first spell of monsoon rains on July 5. Two days ago, the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) had predicted significant monsoon activity across upper and central parts of the country from July 3 to July 7 that could potentially disrupt daily routines.

In a statement, the PMD had said that rain and thunderstorms, including heavy to very heavy falls, were likely to lash Neelum Valley and Muzaffarabad in Azad Jammu and Kashmir during the period. The department had also forecasted thundershowers for Islamabad and cities of Punjab, including Rawalpindi and Lahore,

which could lead to urban flooding.

On Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's (KP) weather, it said that very heavy falls were expected at isolated places, especially in the upper areas of the province, and also including Peshawar and Kohat.

The department also predicted downpours for eastern Balochistan, parts of Sindh, including Umakot and Sukkur, and Skardu and Gilgit in the country's north from July 4. The PDM also alerted the concerned departments about possible flooding of nullahs and streams of Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and other areas as well as urban flooding in Lahore and Peshawar from July 4 to 7. It had further said that landslides are a risk in hilly regions such as Murree and Galiyat. The heavy rainfall might also pose risks to weak structures and disrupt farming and travel activities.

Minister directs timely completion of projects

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister on Law and Parliamentary Affairs Aftab Alam Afridi Advocate has directed the authorities concerned of nation building departments to ensure timely completion of development projects without compromising on the quality of work. He further directed to submit a progress report so far made on ongoing projects to the Deputy Commissioner office as soon as possible.

He gave these instructions while presiding over a review meeting on developmental projects held in the office of Deputy Commissioner Kohat.

Member Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Shafi Jan, Chairman Tehsil Gumbat Sajid Iqbal, Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance Kohat Reena Suhrawardy and authorities concerned of nation building departments attended the meeting. The meeting was briefed in detail on progress so far made on ongoing development schemes.

The Law Minister declared that unnecessary delay or negligence in projects of public interest will not be tolerated any way. He said, the government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has zero tolerance for corruption and commission, so no one will be allowed to misuse government funds and each and every penny of public exchequer will be spent on the people welfare.

Entry to Chashma Jaat banned

F.P. Report

KOHAT: Deputy Commissioner Kohat, Dr. Azmatullah wazir on Wednesday Under Section 144 Cr. PC banned all visitors from outside to visit or enter Chilli Bagh Chashma Jaat in the jurisdiction of Usterzia Payan, Kohat till 14th Muharram.

This was officially notified from the office of Deputy Commissioner Kohat.

2 cops martyred in bandits' attack

F.P. Report

KASHMORE: Police clashed with bandits in Kacha area, two policemen were martyred and three policemen were injured due to heavy firing. Dadhar police check post of Kashmore district was attacked by bandits, youths clashed with Bhadri, it was also reported that some bandits were injured in the fierce firing.

According to details, three police men were injured while there are

reports of injuries to several policemen who were taken away by the robbers, on receiving information about the encounter between the police and the robbers, the Deputy Inspector General of Police Larkana Range Nasir Aftab Patahan took strict notice of the incident and SSP Kashmore was contacted, on which a heavy police force under the leadership of SSP Kashmore was sent after the dacoits, while more personnel and APC were dispatched from the

Larkana Range Police to narrow the circle of dacoits in all areas of Kacha. Speaking to the media.

Deputy Inspector General of Police Range Larkana Nasir Aftab Patahan said that the accused involved in martyring and injuring the policemen in Kacha area will be brought to justice while there is no exception in this matter. It will be done, we are proud of our brave young men who were blessed with martyrdom but did not die.

Injured Afghan terrorist arrested from Maidan

F.P. Report

LOWER DIR: An Afghan Terrorist Commander who was injured in a security operation, was arrested by the police from the Maidan area of Dir Lower, police informed on Wednesday.

Police said an Afghan terrorist commander who had escaped the area after sustaining injuries during an operation by the security forces in Maidan was arrested from a vacant house.

The Afghan Terrorist, named Abdur Rehman, a

resident of district Asmar, Badakhshan province of Afghanistan has been shifted to undisclosed location for interrogation. The terrorist had taken refuge into an empty house in the mountains and was arrested during a search operation, police added.

501 alleged culprits including 12 POs held: Police arrested 501 alleged culprits including 22 drugs dealers during the month of June. According to a progress report issued by District Police Officer Mazhar Iqbal claimed that

12 proclaimed offenders were also arrested during the last month. Police recovered 812798 grams of hashish, 24 grams of heroin, and 138 grams of ice during different raids and checking and cases were registered against the accused.

Police recovered 8 Kalashnikovs, two rifles, 39 pistols, 608 cartridges, 72 chargers and cases were registered against the owners under the Arms Act. Police also recovered stolen items worth Rs 9.92 million.

Security plan chalked out for Muharram

F.P. Report

SHAHDADKOT: A meeting held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Qamber Shahdadkot Sajjad Haider Qadri for security arrangements during Muharram in the district, in which officials related to the district also participated.

Strict fool-proof security should be arranged and peace and order should be maintained at all times; and instructions have been given to all the other officials that they should fulfill their role happily so that Muharram al-Haram passes well. He also urged the scholars belonging to all sects to ensure full implementation of the Code of Conduct and religious harmony among themselves so that the people and especially the pilgrims do not suffer any kind of inconvenience.

An upholder of the atmosphere of fraternity; he said that we are all Muslims and we should take care of each other because Islam is a religion of peace, love and love; Police officers participating in the meeting will preside over the meeting to review the arrangements regarding Muharram Al-Haram at the DC office Qamber; Rangers; Information;

Local Government; Sepco; Health; Officials of various departments including public health engineering and scholars belonging to different factions participated, he added that during Muharram, the code of conduct will be implemented in every case and district control rooms will be established by the police and revenue department. The department will be attached to Sindh.

SEPCO directed the officials to repair and pull up the dangling electric wires and cables; While he gave instructions to the civil servants to end the leakage of civil gas; to provide complete security of police and rangers to the mourning processions and congregations; The drainage crossing at Imam Bargahan should be repaired; and ensure proper use of loudspeakers; He instructed DHO Qamber Shahdadkot Dr. Shahnaz Jatoi and said that emergency should be implemented in the hospitals to ensure the supply of medicines; and ensure the provision of ambulance and medical personnel; and heat stroke ear protection should be arranged; Ensure restoration of street lights before Muharram begins.

Deputy Commissioner Alaman said that all institutions will cooperate

with you; All of you are requested to maintain the atmosphere of peace and order in any case; Because Muharram is the month of patience; For this reason, you and I should all cooperate with each other in this month; May this month pass well; assure these scholars that your problems will be solved on a priority basis; Joint Deputy Commissioner to hold meetings in their respective taluks and solve the problems.

In the meeting, scholars and religious leaders belonging to all sects informed their respective problems and assured their full support; Speaking in the meeting, SSP Qamber Shahdadkot Muhammad Kaleem said that all the problems you have heard will be solved immediately; Protecting people's lives and property is our top priority; On this occasion, DSR Rangers Jhanzeeb Khan spoke and said that after listening to all of your opinions, in-law security will be provided in any case; And the orders received will be followed in any case; it is the duty of all of us to protect this country. All concerned officers participated in the meeting.

Masjid Imam reaches home after alleged abduction

F.P. Report

BUNNU: Maulana Saad Ullah Khan, who was alleged abducted by unknown persons last day, suddenly arrived home according to the details. Last evening, Jamia Masjid Faiz Talab Abbas Mandan asked Maulana Saad Allah Khan to return home from the mosque after the evening prayer, which way they were going that during this time on Mandan Road, unknown people picked up the imam and took him with them, on which Mandan Road was closed to all types of traffic under the leadership of former mayor Malik Iqbal Jadoun and Malik Zarif Khan.

On this occasion, the senior leaders of PTI Malik Hizbollah Khan, General Secretary PTI Malik Khalid Riaz Khan, speaking said that Jamia Masjid Faiz Talab Abbas Mandan before Imam Maulana Saadullah Khan to immediately restore the administration and Announcing the three-day deadline for the

police authorities to hold a protest sit-in in front of the DIG office, the protesters dispersed peacefully last day Maulana Saadullah Khan suddenly arrived at the house where Maulana Saadullah Khan's family and ethnic leaders.

The district administration, police officials and additional SHO Rizwan Khan, along with special thanks to the regional leaders and the people, said that thanks to the unity and agreement of the people, Maulana has reached home. A fire broke out in the nearby clothes shop due to the sparking of the electricity transformer, upon which the authorities of the Tehsil Municipal Administration and the rescue authorities arrived at the scene with the fire brigade and managed to control the fire, however, due to the intensity of the fire, millions of rupees of

cloth turned into a pile of ashes.

One killed, two injured in mishap

DEEPALPUR (INP): A woman was killed and two other persons suffered critical injuries when the motorcycle they were riding on collided with a truck in Deepalpur on Tuesday night.

According to details, the accident occurred at Chowk Shaheedan area of Deepalpur where a speeding truck collided with a motorcycle coming from opposite direction, killing a woman on the spot and injuring two other persons. Police and rescue teams reached the spot and shifted the dead and injured to a nearby hospital. Police sources said the truck driver managed to escape after the accident.

Targets oriented vs degree-oriented education system and its impacts

Wazir Rehman

If we compare the education system of Pakistan with the developed nations of the world. We can easily understand the flaws and shortcomings exist in our education system. In this regard the role of curriculum and its implementation in real spirit cannot be overlooked, because it is curriculum which embark education system in right direction.

The dimensions and priorities of education system has been changed to great extent, it has adopted revolutionary pattern. If we more remained stick with conventional system of education, we will lag behind in progress and development. We will have to divert it to innovative and creative direction, as prevailing in developed nation of the world.

Framing a curriculum national needs are keeping in view, where the benchmarks and standards are set to harmonize social, economic, political and technological development to the education system. Such contents are incorporate in it which enhance the three domain of a student i.e., cognitive psychomotor and effective simply I would say which develop level of knowledge and comprehension, emotions and values, technical and practical skills.

Latest tools of assessments and evaluation used to check the expected change in a student. But unfortunately, our education

system does not reflect these features in practical sense even all these are part of our curriculum to some extent. Where our priorities are quite different getting certificate/degree is the sole purpose, while the skills are required to be developed lying dormant. Consequently, our degree and certificates losing its intrinsic value. It will be very appropriate to refer to the CSS result 2024 in which almost 11 thousand candidates have been participated hardly 2% to 3% qualified the exam in which 2 from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa 3 from Balochistan 1 from Azad Kashmir and 31 from Punjab has qualified it.

This indicates the dilapidated and fragile condition of our education system. Almost in our country the marks of degree/certificate consider the sole criteria for job, while nothing asks about skills, it become the cause of persuasion for students to obtain high marks, even they may not have equipped with that skills. This lure compelled them to use all means for this purpose. If we want to develop our education system we will have to change it and make it skill oriented not degree oriented.

This has also destroyed our examination system where student utilize all sources to secure high marks and obtain its certificate/degree by any way, resolutely they also use illegal and unlawful means for it. The fallouts of this system on our society are very bad. It has germinated the seeds of dishonesty, cor-

ruption, malpractices and morally our society depleting day by day. We all must play our role in this respect however the responsibility of teachers is extraordinary. They should play their role to inculcate moral traits and try to create good qualities in their students. Without the cooperation of teachers this sublime purpose cannot be materialized.

Our examination system and its impacts on morality of students;

The cardinal aim of education is to indoctrinate splendiferous traits in students, that to dream up a better society. It is imperative to focus on character building of students and create characters e.g., Honesty, fairness, truthfulness, sense of competition, sense of responsibility, sense of patriotism sense of national integration and development. A teacher should make a hatred psyche of students towards the evils of society e.g., corruption, bribery, nepotism use of unfair means.

Similarly test, examination is a tool to assess students' capacities to know that to what extent the skills and capacities of students have developed. But unfortunately, it has been seen that when students appear in BISE exam in class 9th for the first time, he sees the prevailing practices of unfair means the blatant use of mobile the attitude and role of teachers thus exam lose the spirit of assessment/evaluation and the moral decline of the students start from there and borrowed bad habits

now it no more remains so bad for them.

The reliability and credibility on the examination system become a question mark and it leads to accomplice uncertainty of results. ETEA, NTS, MDCAT and other test conducting agencies which were somewhat credible status in recent past and they were conducted aptitude tests for various disciplines also been reported recently for paper outing, impersonation and use of blue tooth and other devices. So, it point-out our national afflictions. A prosperous society can only be formed when it based on sound and sublime morality standards. It indicates our backwardness and meekness. The role of teachers cannot be overlooked in this regard as the teacher is the pivotal part of this system.

The delinquency of the teachers in this respect will lead to notoriety. Being Muslims character building is the teaching of Islam, so this becomes easy for teachers to inculcate the true teachings of Islam in the minds of students and develop good virtues of students. The damnation and creating sense of abhorrence among students against all societal evils will leads to minimize these mal practices. Boards and other examination conducting agencies should pattern examinations and tests on digitalizing scale and to incorporate the use of computer technology that to minimize human interference and eliminate the unfair means

and enhance standard. Strict implementation of rules, serious measures should be taken to discourage associated mafias, to rescue the system we should take stern actions. The appellate factor is teacher community they should play their due role in true sense.

Why our education system declining? What is the reason being lot of steps have been taken but still in vain to achieve desirable goals? Are frequent experiments on education system lead us to success or further deteriorate the situation? Although a lot of measurements have been taken to improve our examination system but could not proves effective.

Basically, the durability and soundness of everything depends upon its foundation, firm base let a building to stand strongly. Recently, we have seen that govt has taken various steps in secondary and higher level, where situation has been improved to some extent, but the impacts could not be seen in the whole education system. The reason is quite clear, as we are continuously ignoring the primary education, consequently the set targets could not achievable. In MAs the process of rationalization still not materialized where in primary schools, for 300 and 400 students hardly two or three teachers and two rooms are available.

Furthermore, most of schools are single teachers, where only one teacher drive the whole

process. Let me to inform you that without facilities we can continue the teaching learning process but without teacher we can't do so. I will mention some supporting statistics in r/o district Bajaur, we have 939 sanctioned teaching posts in all GPS and GMPs in which 861 are filled. Currently enrolled students are 86000 so the current STR 100 students per teacher, while STR should not be exceed than 40. It means we need sanction of 1211 teachers 's posts in primary schools.

The same situation expected in other districts of MNAs too. I appeal from our MNAs and MPAs to play your due role in this matter take this a serious matter as employment opportunities will be provided on one side and Quality of education will also be improved. This will boost up the trust and confidence of parents on public schools and will minimize dropout rates. Our students passing primary but can't read nor write as in the same manner they pass middle and appear in board exam in 9th and 10th without reading and writing skills where we expect SLO base paper to be solved by these students even 90% of them lack the skills of reading and writing.

Making primary education strong, I hope the rest problem will be resolved automatically. I have full trust on our teachers that they will overcome the challenges before them with their professional attitude, devotion and sincerity.



GAZA STRIP: Displaced Palestinians leave an area of east Khan Younis after the Israeli army issued an evacuation order for parts of the city and Rafah.

Hurricane Beryl kills six, causes ‘immense destruction’

CARIBBEAN: Hurricane Beryl is barrelling towards Jamaica after battering the southeastern Caribbean, killing at least six people across the region and flattening some 90 percent of homes on one island in the Grenadines archipelago.

Beryl - the earliest storm on record to reach Category 5, the highest on the Saffir-Simpson Scale - was expected to start losing intensity. But forecasters said it would still be an "extremely dangerous" Category 4 storm when it passes near or over Jamaica on Wednesday and near the Cayman Islands on Thursday. Scientists cited human-caused climate change as the likely culprit for the storm's rapid strengthening.

The storm was located about 300 miles (480km) east-southeast of the Jamaican capital, Kingston, with top winds of 150mph (250kmph), and officials there warned residents to gather provisions and safeguard their homes. "I urge all Jamaicans to stock up on food, batteries, candles, and water. Secure your critical documents and remove any trees or items that could endanger your property," Jamaican Prime Minister Andrew Holness said on X. "Everyone, including those living alone, should take these necessary steps now," he wrote. "It's better to be prepared than to regret not preparing." The National Hurricane Center (NHC) in the United States said Jamaica appears to be in the direct path of Beryl and that the storm would bring life-threatening winds, heavy rainfall and storm surges to the island nation. "We are most concerned about Jamaica, where we are expecting the core of a major hurricane to pass near or over the island," said Michael Brennan, the director of the NHC, in an online briefing.

"You want to be in a safe place where you can ride out the storm. Be prepared to stay in that location through Wednesday," Beryl has already left a trail of death and devastation in its wake. Three people were reported killed in Grenada and another in St Vincent and the Grenadines, officials said. Two other deaths were

reported in northern Venezuela, where five people are missing, officials said. Some 25,000 people in that area also were affected by heavy rainfall from Beryl. In Grenada, Prime Minister Dickon Mitchell said the island of Carriacou, which was struck by the eye of the storm, has been all but cut off, with houses, telecommunications and fuel facilities there flattened. Two of the three deaths recorded in Grenada happened on Carriacou, he said.

"The situation is grim," Mitchell told a news conference. "There is no power and there is almost complete destruction of homes and buildings on the island. The roads are not passable, and in many instances, they are cut off because of the large quantity of debris strewn all over the streets," Mitchell added. "The possibility that there may be more fatalities remains a grim reality as movement is still highly restricted." In St Vincent and the Grenadines, Prime Minister Ralph Gonsalves said the hurricane left "immense destruction" in its wake, including the destruction of some 90 percent of homes on Union Island. He said "similar levels of devastation" were expected on the islands of Myreau and Canouan. The last strong hurricane to hit the southeast Caribbean was Hurricane Ivan 20 years ago, which killed dozens of people in Grenada. Mikey Hutchinson, a Grenadian journalist, told Al Jazeera he had seen destruction in many parts of the mainland, with roofs ripped off homes and agricultural land badly damaged.

"I've seen nutmeg, I've seen cocoa, I've seen coconut - I've seen just about everything destroyed by this powerful catastrophic hurricane," he said. "We are very concerned. We've experienced back in 2004 a hurricane similar to this one. It was more devastating. It took down about 90 to 95 percent of our houses and so it was really hard to build back. And so having experienced a hurricane of that magnitude and then yesterday again having to experience a Category 4 hurricane with threats of more to come, it raises our anxiety," he added.

One of the homes that Beryl damaged in Carriacou belongs to the parents of United Nations Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell. In a statement, Stiell said the climate crisis is worsening faster than expected. "Whether in my homeland of Carriacou, hammered by Hurricane Beryl, or in the heatwaves and floods crippling communities in some of the world's largest economies, it's clear that the climate crisis is pushing disasters to record-breaking new levels of destruction," he said.

"Disasters on a scale that used to be the stuff of science fiction are becoming meteorological facts, and the climate crisis is the chief culprit," he added. Beryl is the Atlantic season's first hurricane, and the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) said it "sets an alarming precedent for what is expected to be a very active hurricane season". Scientists said climate change likely contributed to Beryl's early formation, while also driving how quickly it intensified. Global warming has helped push temperatures in the North Atlantic to record highs, said Christopher Rozoff, an atmospheric scientist at the US-based National Center for Atmospheric Research. The warmer waters lead to more evaporation, which fuels more intense hurricanes featuring higher wind speeds, he said. Beryl jumped from a Category 1 to a Category 4 storm in under 10 hours, according to Andra Garner, a Rowan University meteorologist. That marked the fastest intensification ever recorded before September, the peak of the Atlantic hurricane season, she added.

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, meanwhile, predicted that the 2024 hurricane season, which runs from June 1 to November 30, would be well above average, with between 17 and 25 named storms. The forecast called for as many as 13 hurricanes and four major hurricanes. An average Atlantic hurricane season produces 14 named storms, seven of them hurricanes, and three major hurricanes. — Aljazeera

Taiwan says China seizes fishing boat near Chinese coast

TAIPEI (Reuters): Chinese officials boarded and then seized a Taiwanese fishing boat operating near China's coast close to a Taiwan-controlled island and took it to a Chinese port, Taiwan's coast guard said, in a further escalation of tensions.

China views democratically governed Taiwan as its own territory and has ramped up pressure on Taipei since President Lai Ching-te took office in May, a man Beijing accuses of being a "separatist". The squid fishing boat was near the Taiwan-administered Kinmen islands, which sit next to the Chinese cities of Xiamen and Quanzhou, but in Chinese waters when it was boarded and seized by two Chinese maritime administration boats, Taiwan's coast guard said.

The Taiwanese boat was operating during China's

no-fishing period, the coast guard said, adding Taiwan will communicate with China and urge them to release the fishermen as soon as possible. China's Taiwan Affairs Office did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Taiwan sent its own coast guard ships to assist and broadcast warnings asking China to release the fishing boat, but China's ships broadcast back saying not to interfere, Taiwan's coast guard said. Taiwan's ships then backed off to avoid a conflict and the Taiwanese fishing vessel was then taken to a Chinese port, it added, saying three of the five fishermen were Indonesian migrant workers.

Taiwan Coast Guard Administration Deputy Director-General Hsieh Ching-chin told reporters in

Taipei that China should explain why it had seized the boat, and pointed out that in previous cases, fishermen had been released after paying fines when operating during China's no-fishing season. Taiwanese fishing boats need to raise their alert level and the coast guard will also strengthen its patrols, he added. "The coast guard also calls on the mainland side not to use political factors to handle this situation," Hsieh said.

Judha Nugraha, director for citizen protection at Indonesia's foreign ministry, told Reuters the country's consulate general in Guangzhou will assist the detained Indonesians. This is not the first time a Taiwan fishing boat has taken by Chinese authorities after operating in that country's waters, an official

said, speaking on condition of anonymity given the sensitivity of the situation. A Taiwan official, who's familiar with the island's security planning, told Reuters they have issued alerts to fishing and transport authorities around Taiwan to pay attention to "possible risks" amid frequent Chinese coast guard activities in the region, including near Japan and the Philippines. It is not uncommon for Taiwan and China to detain each other's trespassing fishing boats. So far this year Taiwan has detained five such boats from China, Taiwan coast guard data shows. Chinese maritime enforcement and coast guard ships have been regularly operating around Kinmen since February after two Chinese fishermen died trying to flee Taiwan's coast guard.

Drug gang turf war dumps dozens of bodies in Mexico truck

MEXICO CITY: Dozens of bodies discovered in a truck in Mexico have been linked to a violent turf war between rival gangs, according to authorities. At least 19 bodies were discovered in or around a dump truck in the southern Mexican state of Chiapas, officials said. A recent surge in gang violence related to drug and migrant trafficking has been plaguing the region.

The Ministry of Public Security said the male bod-

ies were found in a dump truck abandoned on a rural road near the town of La Concoridia. The officials said that the victims were shot to death, and included at least six men carrying Guatemalan identity documents. The events leading to the gruesome discovery are believed to have occurred on Friday near the border with Guatemala, where violence has been rising in recent years.

An initial investigation

said the clash was between the Sinaloa cartel, one of the most powerful in Mexico, and another gang identified as the "Chiapas and Guatemala" cartel. The ministry said in a statement that the two groups were battling over "criminal control of the border area". The Chiapas region is key for the trafficking of drugs, arms, and migrants towards the United States, according to the non-governmental organisation Insight Crime.

The recent surge in violence has led thousands of people to flee their homes. It has also pushed the government to deploy an additional 1,200 personnel to reinforce the country's southern border with Guatemala. Spiralling criminal violence has seen more than 450,000 people murdered in Mexico since the government of then-president Felipe Calderon launched a military offensive against drug cartels in 2006. — Aljazeera

Kazakh dissident dies following assassination attempt

KYIV: A Kazakh dissident has died in Ukraine, two weeks after being shot outside his home last month. Kyiv-based journalist Aydos Sadykov was shot in the head while seated in a car with his wife on June 18. Ukrainian prosecutors suspect that the "carefully planned" attack was carried out by a pair of suspected assassins from Kazakhstan.

Sadykov's wife, Natalya Sadykova, blamed Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev for the death of her husband, who was an outspoken critic of the Central Asian country's leadership. "My beloved husband, father of our three children, great son of the Kazakh people. Aydos dedicated his life to Kazakhstan and suffered martyrdom at the hands of killers," Sadykova said in a Facebook post. "His death is on Tokayev's conscience," she declared.

According to the office of Ukraine's prosecutor general, two Kazakh citizens, one of them a former policeman, are suspected of shooting Sadykov. Both left the country on the same day, they say, escaping to Moldova.

While Kazakhstan has since detained one of the suspects, named as Altai Zhakanbayev, it has said it would not hand him over to Ukraine. The second suspect remains at large. President Tokayev instructed Kazakh law enforcement agencies to cooperate with Ukraine to locate the suspects, his spokesperson said last month, according to Russian news agencies.

"Astana is ready to cooperate with Ukraine, including through Interpol," the spokesperson was cited as saying. Human Rights Watch has called for an investigation into the shooting of Sadykov, who ran a YouTube channel often critical of Kazakhstan's former president Nursultan Nazarbayev and then his successor Tokayev. "The news of the attack on Sadykov during broad daylight in the Kyiv city centre is deeply disturbing," said Hugh Williamson, Europe and Central Asia director at Human Rights Watch last month. "Ukrainian authorities should ensure Sadykov's safety, identify the attacker, bring them to justice, and determine who ordered the attack. Kazakhstan should show it is committed to the rule of law during this process." — Aljazeera

Fears for Australian child missing

MELBOURNE (BBC): A desperate search is under way in northern Australia for a child feared to have been taken by a crocodile. The 12-year-old was last seen around dusk, swimming near the remote town of Palumpa - about a 7-hour drive south west of Darwin in the Northern Territory (NT).

Police say a specialist search and rescue team has been deployed after "initial reports stated the child had been attacked by a crocodile". The NT is home to an estimated 100,000 saltwater crocodiles, more than anywhere else in the world, but attacks are uncommon.

Members of the community in Palumpa - home to only 364 people - and local police began searching for the child immediately after they vanished in Mango Creek around 17:30 local time (08:00 GMT). They have now been joined by additional officers and the expert search and rescue team who are combing over both land and water. An aerial search may also be launched, according to local media.

"Officers are currently searching a large section of the creek via boat and we thank [the] community for their ongoing assistance," Senior Sergeant Erica Gibson said in a statement. "Local officers are on scene and our thoughts are with the family and the community." Found all around the northern edges of Australia - from Broome in Western Australia to Gladstone in Queensland - saltwater crocodiles were hunted to near extinction but numbers have bounced back since the practice was banned in the 1970s.

Orban urges truce on Kyiv visit

KYIV (BBC): Viktor Orban arrived in Ukraine for an unannounced visit having just taken over as rotating president of the European Union. While in Kyiv, the Hungarian prime minister said a ceasefire between Russia and Ukraine could speed up negotiations to end the war that followed Russia's full-scale invasion in 2022.

Mr Orban has been a critic of Western support for Ukraine and is seen as the European leader closest to Russian President Vladimir Putin. This was his first visit to Ukraine in 12 years, although he has met Mr Putin repeatedly during that time. During his joint appearance with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky the body language between them was not warm and neither took questions from the media after they gave their statements. Mr Orban previously slowed agreement on a 50bn (\$54bn; £42bn) EU aid package designed to support Ukraine in its defence against Russia.

But for the next six months his position as head of the European Council means he has an influential role as a figurehead for Europe. He came to Ukraine on his second day in that role for discussions, saying there was a need to solve previous disagreements and focus on the future. In his statement following their meeting, Mr Zelensky said it was "very important to have Europe's support for Ukraine maintained at sufficient level... it's important for co-operation between all the neighbours



in Europe to become more meaningful and mutually beneficial". In his own statement, Mr Orban stressed the need to work together but also said he had raised the idea of a ceasefire to hasten negotiations with Russia. "I have asked the president to consider whether... a quick ceasefire could be used to speed up peace negotiations... I am grateful for his frank dialogue and his answers." Mr Orban also said: "My first trip has taken me here because the issue of peace is important not only for Ukraine, but for the whole of Europe. This war that you are suffering is deeply impacting European security." President Zelensky did not publicly respond to those comments.

Later, in a post on X, the Ukrainian leader said Mr Orban's visit to Ukraine was a "clear signal to all of us of the importance of unity in Europe and taking collective steps". "We discussed the path to a just, lasting, and fair peace." Many Ukrainians believe a ceasefire would simply cement Russia's hold over territory it has taken from

Ukraine and, if negotiations were to take place, they would prefer them to be conducted from a position of strength rather than on the back foot. Ukraine's Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said his country was open to "work with everyone and solve problems".

"This work is difficult and time-consuming, but it eventually yields tangible results," he told the BBC. "During the visit, President Zelensky had a candid but constructive discussion with Prime Minister Orban about ways to achieve a just peace, not simply a ceasefire or peace talks." The two leaders also discussed bilateral issues including the 100,000 ethnic Hungarians who reside in Ukraine. Mr Orban said the two countries were determined to put past disagreements behind them, and that he was reassured progress was being made on the rights of the ethnic Hungarians. He also wished Ukraine "every success". The EU opened membership talks for Ukraine the week before Hungary assumed the EU Council Presidency.

Hundreds of candidates pull out of French run-off

PARIS: France's left-wing and centrist parties have withdrawn hundreds of candidates from Sunday's parliamentary elections, in a move aimed at thwarting the formation of the country's first far-right government since World War II.

The mass exit came before a registration deadline before the final runoff vote on Sunday. The withdrawing candidates were mostly either allies of French President Emmanuel Macron or from left-wing parties. Macron had called for snap parliamentary elections in June after his party was trounced in European elections, but the move appears to have largely backfired. Instead of shoring up the mandate of his centrist Renaissance party, Marine Le Pen's far-right National Rally (RN) party won the most seats in the first round of voting on June 30.

Le Pen's party, which espouses an anti-immigration platform with policies decried as Islamophobic, hopes to win enough seats in the second round of voting to form a government. Le Pen said the party will still seek to form a government even if it falls just short of the 289-seat absolute majority in the 577-seat National Assembly. Macron's centrists and the left-wing

hope they can prevent such an event, with the president telling a closed-door meeting of ministers at the Elysee Palace that the top priority was blocking the RN from power.

That would involve supporting members of the far-left France Unbowed party (LFI) if necessary, Macron said, despite some opposition from members of his own party. LFI party member Francois Ruffin also said that there was unity in "one objective ... to deny an absolute majority to the National Rally." Reporting from Paris, Al Jazeera's Natacha Butler said that the candidates who dropped out were typically running in three-way races where the far-right candidate appeared to be leading.

"It means that in a number of those constituencies where there was a three-way race, there will actually just be a two-way race between the far-right candidate and whoever has stayed in the race, whether it be a centrist candidate or a left-wing alliance candidate," Butler said. "The impact this will actually have on Sunday when voters go back to the polls is not predictable," she added. Just 76 lawmakers, almost all from the far edges of the political spectrum, were elected out-

right in the first round of voting.

Most projections in the immediate aftermath of the first round of voting showed the RN falling short of an absolute majority. Several analysts have said the most likely outcome will be hung parliament that could lead to months of political paralysis, at a time when France is preparing to host the Summer Olympics. The chaos also risks damaging the international credibility of Macron, a champion of Ukraine's fight against the Russian invasion who is set to attend a NATO summit in Washington, DC next week.

For her part, Le Pen has said she would make her 28-year-old protege Jordan Bardella prime minister if her party gains a majority. That raises the prospect that a far-right official serving concurrently with Macron, who has pledged to finish out his term ending in 2027. Similar efforts to build a broad coalition of centrist and left-wing parties to thwart the far-right in France have been successful in the past. That included in 2002, when voters rallied behind Jacques Chirac to defeat Le Pen's father, Jean-Marie, in a presidential contest. — Aljazeera

Lukashenko says will release ill opponents

MINSK (Reuters): Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko said that he was likely to issue an amnesty to some of his jailed political opponents who had taken part in protests against his reelection but were now seriously ill in prison with cancer.

Lukashenko, in power since 1994, is one of Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin's closest allies and stands accused by his opponents and Western rights groups of human rights abuses and jailing opponents on a variety of charges. His re-election to a sixth term in 2020 sparked unprecedented street protests by demonstrators accusing him of rigging the vote. Police detained participants en masse - rights groups say more than 25,000 - in the months after the election. "Don't be surprised if

our people who are seriously ill -- that is what is being written about them -- are released in a few days," Lukashenko told a gathering marking Belarus' national holiday, according to the official BelTA news agency. "Those who did not escape to places not that far away and who were smashing up or undermining the country in 2020. These people are truly ill, mostly with cancer."

Lukashenko did not identify those who might qualify for the amnesty, timed to coincide with the holiday and the World War Two liberation of the capital Minsk from Nazi invaders. The opposition rights group Vyasna lists 1,403 political prisoners in the ex-Soviet state. It said that as of May, 254 political detainees whose health was at risk, including 92 who were seriously ill and 63 over the age of 60. The

Belarusian-language service of US-funded Radio Liberty said those suffering from cancer included regional politician Grigory Kostusyov, journalist Kseniya Lutskina, musician Pavel Kuchinsky, religious activist Pavel Kuchinsky and Ruslan Slutsky, accused of sabotaging rail lines.

Lukashenko's hold on power was strengthened after Putin assured him of support in 2020 amid the protests. The Belarusian leader in 2022 allowed his country's territory to be used as a staging post for Russia's invasion of Ukraine. Most of Lukashenko's most prominent opponents have fled abroad, many to neighbouring Lithuania and Poland. Those in exile include defeated presidential candidate Svitlana Tikhonouskaya, who now heads the opposition.

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Addressing the good, bad and ugly of AI

EVEN at this nascent stage, artificial intelligence is displaying its abilities to transform our lives and the world. Some countries are already experiencing its profound impacts.

In hospitals, AI has already become a life-saver, by helping doctors with diagnosis and treatment recommendations. In schools, AI-powered personalized learning tools are tailoring learning experiences to individual needs and interests, making learning much easier and more relevant for students. In factories, AI is markedly boosting productivity by automating tasks and optimizing processes. A recent report by Goldman Sachs suggests that generative AI could raise global GDP by 7 percent.

Yet one-third of the world's population still doesn't have access to the internet. Despite the coming Age of AI, most countries, especially developing ones, have yet to truly access, use and benefit from the technology, and the global digital divide continues to widen rapidly. It is an undeniable fact that AI gains are now being reaped only by wealthy countries and major tech companies, with almost all developing countries left behind. Thus there have been increasing calls from the international community to strengthen global cooperation on AI capacity building within the United Nations framework, so that nations can have equal opportunities in terms of the development and use of AI and share the achievements and benefit of the technology.

That explains why a China-proposed resolution in this regard was adopted unanimously at the 78th session of the UN General Assembly on Monday. Co-sponsored by more than 140 countries, the resolution encourages international cooperation and practical actions to help countries, especially developing ones, strengthen their AI capacity building, while calling upon the international community to "provide and promote a fair, open, inclusive and nondiscriminatory business environment" for the development of AI.

The UN resolution will "help all countries, especially developing ones, benefit equally from AI development," Fu Cong, China's permanent representative to the UN, said.

As a bid to bridge the digital divide, improve global AI governance, and accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, the resolution demonstrates China's responsible attitude and the important role it is playing in AI development and governance.

China has long called for advancement of AI technologies to benefit humanity and contribute to building a community with a shared future for mankind. The Global AI Governance Initiative it announced last October underscores the need to increase the representation and voice of developing countries in global AI governance, and highlights the role of AI in promoting sustainable development and tackling global challenges such as climate change.

The UN resolution also warns of the unpredictable risks and complicated challenges that are the downside potential of AI. These include improper or malicious design, development, deployment and use of AI systems. The support the UN resolution has received indicates that China is not alone in wanting to release the potential of AI for the common good, while ensuring there are safeguards in place to protect against its bad and ugly potentials.

Those countries with a Cold War mentality that are trying to create "small yard, high fence" for AI development, with the purpose of blocking China's technological development, should not be nescient of the dangers of Cassandra's curse.

The United States, for example, last month issued draft rules for restricting investments in AI and other technology sectors in China that Washington deems could threaten its national security. The sanctions will not only be detrimental to the healthy development of AI technology, but will also be divisive when it comes to global AI governance such as establishing AI-related rules and standards. The US should stop confrontation and cooperate with China in the AI sector so that the huge benefits from the technology can be shared by all nations in a fair and more comprehensive way, while open lines of communication can be maintained on the risks and safety of AI.

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Resolving the problem

Adil Hussain

THE word "crisis" is very common to all the humans particularly to those who are living in Pakistan. Since its establishment, there is a prolonged list of issues pertaining to economy, provincial Autonomy, terrorism and the growing concerns for social welfare in the state, that invited a great deal of attention from different sections of society to get out of this misery. The nature of these problems and the possibility of their solutions have been widely discussed, repeated with modifications and presented for broader consensus but brought little change in the existing order. Partly because of the structural arrangements of the system and partly due to the absence of an objective and a multidimensional approach, the ideas launched by so many thinkers ultimately failed to make their way into the system.

One of the most debated issue in Pakistan is the economic stability. Economic stability means to devise a comprehensive system for economic progress and development that can attract investment both from foreign and domestic entrepreneurs to help the state and its citizens in improving their standard of living. The consciousness of this economic prosperity makes the cornerstone of the political programs of all the parties on the basis of which they campaign for election to get into the public office.

Mostly, every political party carries its own version of economic revival which often leads to the inevitable conflict in the highly polarized society of Pakistan. Majority of these plans are need base, short-lived and center oriented. Such plans promotes inequality, raise grievances and invites strong hostility from the federating units which ultimately results in failure. Conflict arise when the government allocate more or less resources to a particular unit and mistreat the remaining portions, thus increases regional disparities. This regional disparity accompanied by the growing demand for provincial autonomy was the real motive behind the

separation of East Pakistan, now Bangladesh.

This conflict over resource distribution between the followers of a strong and weak center is getting more attention as the problems of inflation, unemployment, poverty, illiteracy, health, poor infrastructure, terrorism and religious extremism are deepening their roots in society. According to the most recent Report of the World Bank, 40% of Pakistani are still illiterate, over 20 million children of school-age are out of school, poverty ratio is almost 40% and health indicators including malnutrition levels remains grim. This is simply what the World Bank refer to as a "silent, deep human capital crisis".

Progress and well being based on inequality is both ineffective and short lived. The enrichment of one province at the expense of others is not only detrimental to economic stability but it also airs the prospects of regionalism, which, if joined by ethnic priorities would badly shake the very foundation of the state. For removing such grievances and tackling the more urgent issues like financial shares, poverty and terrorism, it is essential to devise an agreed and workable mechanism that can overcome these problems with iron hands from a very close distance. The central government, acting as the custodian of the state should need to assist the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan in dealing with these vital issues instead of acting directly from Islamabad. The "hotspot service", in those areas which are most directly exposed to the greater vulnerabilities of terrorism, poverty and hunger should need to be taken under consideration for greater output. The best way to handle these crisis is to allocate more resources to all those units which needs the most.

Faced with the bitter legacy of the East Pakistan crisis and the stronger opposition from the National Awami Party (now ANP) and the like minded, Z. A. Bhutto, skillfully materialized the situation and accorded

greater weightage to the long awaited provincial Autonomy, for which Mr. Jinnah had taken a much responsible stance throughout his political career. The 1973 constitution provides for three key forums—the National

Finance Commission, the Council of Common Interest and National Economic Council, to deal with the regulation of financial distribution, conflict resolution and to coordinate in the planning and execution of the socio-economic programs. Started in 1974, the initial population based NFC awards failed in satisfying the grievances of the provinces. However, The 7th NFC award of 2009, based on Population 82%, Backwardness 10%, Inverse population density 5% and Revenue collection 12.7%, with 57.5% provincial shares was cordially welcomed and unanimously approved by all the concerned parties.

This widely recognized formula tremendously worked in certain areas and enhanced provincial output however the central government, forced by the International Monetary Fund, is looking forward for its rollback. Those who urges for readjustment believe that the resource allocation of the award was unrealistic: the provinces are wasting resources and did very little in the areas of taxation, agriculture and the real estate. Former finance minister, Miftah Ismail, points out that the provinces give 455% increase in payroll expenses and 480% increase in developmental spending and urged for dramatic changes in the existing formula which has left the center with nothing good. While the government with the newly created Special Investment Facilitation Council, is striving for economic revival, the provinces shows little interest to reduce their share in favour of the more lavish and expensive center.

Every action brings with it new challenges for structural arrangements. Though the seventh NFC Award and the

Eighteenth Constitutional amendment have successfully tackled much of the grievances, the provinces failed to ensure

the further devolution of power to local governments which is contrary to the basic motive of the 18th amendment. Without empowering local governing bodies and equipping these units with the highly professional and skilled officers, the fruits of this badly needed program would hardly be achieved. If failed in modifying the system, the most logical consequence for the provinces would be the greater interference of the federal government which will gradually result in the re-centralization of the system.

Problems are visible but the approach to their solutions makes them more complicated. The center-province conflict, characterized mostly by personal ambitions, political opposition, hate and ignorance of the conflicting parties blocks the way forward. This has been the case with the PTI led Pakhtunkhwa and the central government. Though the province has legitimate concerns about some issues regarding the allocation of provincial shares, fighting terrorism and the like, the more inflexible and rigid style of dealing with each others have hampered the process of any meaningful output. Without developing a political culture based on compromise, respect and maximum flexibility the situation would become even more dangerous in the near future.

While the country is suffering from weakening economic resurgence, the growing differences of opinions, leading to political instability would face the country with much deeper crisis. A National Consensus Dialogue, based on a more flexible and compromised approach is essential to deal with the most outstanding issues of Transparency and accountability, strengthening the Local Government institutions, strengthening of ECP, reforming NAB, and for addressing the grievances and problems that surrounds the NFC award for building political and economic stability that can help the state to take a more balanced stance both domestically and abroad in the changing situations.

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Inflection point calls for change of approach by Washington

LI YANG

SPEAKING at the Brookings Institution on Monday, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken offered some food for thought on what truly hinders the healthy development of Sino-US ties.

In the 54-minute conversation between Blinken and Brookings President Cecilia Rouse, and some members of the audience, China was mentioned at least 24 times. In comparison, Russia was mentioned 17 times, indicating which country is the major concern in Washington and US think tank circles.

With the NATO summit in Washington around the corner, Blinken took advantage of the occasion to explain why the United States has invited four of its Asia-Pacific allies—Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the Republic of Korea — to the gathering. Citing challenges from China, he made it clear that the US attaches great significance to integrating its Atlantic and Pacific security networks.

As Blinken hinted, the Joe Biden administration is even more convinced now than it was three years ago that the US should seek to

work closely with all countries, not only its allies, to deal with the challenges from China, and try its best to hammer home the message around the world that China is the common concern of all.

Blinken's referring to the remark by Japanese

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Prime Minister Fumio Kishida that what happens in Europe today could happen in Asia tomorrow explains how desperate the Biden administration has become to speculate on the Russia-Ukraine conflict to project China as a key security concern for both European and Asian coun-

tries.

Blinken bragged about the remarkable progress the Biden administration has made over the past three years in persuading the US' European allies and critical Asian partners to align their approach to China-related issues with that of

the US—"both the shared recognition of what the challenge is and, increasingly, a shared view on what to do about it". That will apparently also be a major item on the agenda of the upcoming NATO summit in the US capital.

As the US is leaving no stone unturned to coerce or hoodwink other countries to jump on its anti-China bandwagon and trying its best to contain China's development, it is hypocritical that the Biden administration, as Blinken said, still seeks to do everything it can to cooperate with China in areas where they can. But the latest complaints from the US side that NASA wasn't invited to take part in China's mission to retrieve samples from the far side of the moon as the European Space Agency was, along with France, and Italy and Pakistan, serve to belie that claim.

Washington should be reminded that it is the US' domestic legislation, such as the Wolf Amendment, that blocks such cooperation. So the real question that should be asked is not why NASA has not been invited but why US scientists and institutions are not allowed by their own government to participate in the project.

After more than three years in power, the Biden administration has yet to develop a correct judgment on China. That's why its China policy and practices are still proceeding in the wrong direction.

The fate of the Rohingya may be in the Arakan Army's hands

Nasir Uddin

IN late May, reports emerged that tens of thousands of Rohingya have been forced to flee their homes in the townships of Buthidaung and Maungdaw, northern Rakhine State.

The United Nations said it had collected witness testimonies about the killings of Rohingya civilians and the systematic torching of homes. It indicated that these crimes started after the Myanmar military withdrew from these townships and the rebel Arakan Army (AA) advanced.

If it is proven that AA was responsible, this would not bode well for the future of the Rohingya community. As a major force in the Brotherhood Alliance, a coalition of rebel forces fighting Myanmar's junta, the AA has made considerable advances in Rakhine State. If the rebels prevail, the AA would have significant influence over the region's affairs, including any decisions regarding the repatriation of Rohingya refugees.

Involvement in atrocities against the Rohingya would mean that the AA's rhetoric about upholding this Muslim community's rights does not hold water. That is why the international community needs to take action if it wishes to see the Rohingya refugee crisis resolved.

A history of tensions

Since Burma (Myanmar's old name) gained independence from Britain in 1948, various ethnic groups have sought territorial independence or increased regional autonomy, challenging the dominance of the Bamar ethnic group in the country's governance.

The military's seizure of power in 1962 intensified persecution against these groups, prompting armed resistance. Today, despite being labelled "separatists" or "insurgent groups" by the military junta, these groups are leading a struggle against the junta that is widely seen as a "fight for democracy".

The AA was established in April 2009 in the border area between Myanmar and China. It was overwhelmingly supported by the Kachin Independence Army (KIA) which trained AA's first recruits in Kachin State. The AA's declared objective was "the struggle for national liberation and the restoration of Arakan sovereignty to the people of Arakan".

Before 2017, the Rohingya and the AA did not have a comfortable relationship let alone close ties. While both occasionally faced atrocities and crackdowns by Myanmar's security forces under the pretext of counterinsurgency operations, they hardly collaborated.

The Rohingya harboured significant mistrust towards the AA, mainly due to the Muslim-Buddhist religious divide in Rakhine state. Predominantly Muslim, the Rohingya view the largely Buddhist AA as part of the dominant Bamar community. This association has led some Rohingya I have interviewed to accuse the AA of involvement in the 2017 genocidal campaign by the Myanmar army.

The AA, for its part, largely accepted the Myanmar government's narrative that the Rohingya are migrants and do not belong in the country.

Post-coup rhetoric

In 2021, the Myanmar military seized power again in a coup, triggering widespread protests and massive mobilisation of armed resistance forces. The Three Brotherhood Alliance, which was formed in 2019, allied itself with the civilian National Unity Government (NUG) and became the biggest rebel force challenging the junta. It is fighting side by side with the People's Defence Force (PDF), NUG's armed wing.

In October 2023, the alliance launched Operation 1027 and quickly advanced against the Myanmar armed

forces in several states.

Seeking international legitimacy and support from local communities, the AA has tried to appeal to the Rohingya, affirming that it recognises the human and citizenship rights of all residents of Rakhine State. However, even before the attacks in May, past statements by some of its leaders cast a shadow of doubt over this rhetoric.

In a 2022 interview with Asia Times, AA leader Major General Twan Mrat Naing said: "We recognise the human rights and citizenship rights of all residents of Arakan (Rakhine), but a massive repatriation of refugees in the current situation could unleash a new wave of unrest."

He also raised questions about the Rohingya identity, saying that "A major issue for most Arakanese would also be the name with which the refugees would want to be identified. 'Rohingya' is not a term that most Arakanese accept. They find it offensive as they feel that it deprives them of their history." Such statements reveal that the AA leadership has not renounced the narrative that the Rohingya are "illegal Bengali migrants".

The junta has sought to exploit the intercommunal tensions between the Rohingya and the Buddhist Rakhine. It has engaged in forced recruitment among the Rohingya and pressured communities to stage anti-AA demonstrations. Rohingya recruits have been used to attack Buddhist communities, fuelling anger.

According to one report, the attacks in late May were revenge by the AA for alleged Rohingya involvement in similar attacks in April on Buddhist communities.

Securing Rohingya rights

Many believe that if the military dictatorship falls and democracy resumes, the Rohingya will be allowed to go back to their homes, as Myanmar embarks on building an inclusive society.

While I recognise that there have been some positive changes within the pro-democracy political leadership, under the current circumstances, I remain sceptical about their ability and willingness to carry out Rohingya repatriation.

The NUG has recognised the Rohingya identity and already appointed a noted Rohingya activist, U Aung Kyaw Moe, as deputy minister in its Ministry of Human Rights. But it seems to me, these actions are just showmanship and are aimed at securing international support and recognition for the NUG.

What's more, armed groups like the AA will inevitably play a significant role in managing the situation in Rakhine state. Their positive rhetoric towards the Rohingya is even less convincing, given the latest reports of attacks on the community.

Recognising these realities, Rohingya diaspora leaders are urging the Rohingya people, "to unite and form their own force capable of joining the federal army and the People's Defense Force (PDF) ... to initiate meaningful political dialogues with the AA, the National Unity Government (NUG), and other ethnic armed organizations (EAOs) to ensure recognition of Rohingya ethnicity and federal rights". If the international community wants to solve the Rohingya refugee crisis, then it needs to play its part as well.

It should make its support for and recognition of the NUG conditional on rigorous guarantees for the repatriation of Rohingya refugees residing in Bangladesh and elsewhere. It should also demand that the NUG leadership negotiate with the AA and ensure the safety of the Rohingya currently living in the Rakhine State.

As things stand now, unless there is consistent pressure applied from outside, the prospects for Rohingya repatriation remain bleak.

Turn left at the next intersection Why the US needs a viable third party

THE past few months of student protests against Israel's war on Gaza, and the way they were suppressed by the authorities and maligned as "violent" and terror-adjacent even by supposedly left-leaning, progressive political leaders exposed an important truth: the United States is in desperate need of a viable, left-to-centre-left third party committed to democracy.

It's not just the Republicans and their open embrace of fascism that is the problem any more. The response of President Joe Biden and other leading Democrats to the student protests made clear that these days even the party supposedly representing the left in America is leaning right, and has an obvious anti-democratic bent.

"Order must prevail ... Vandalism, trespassing, breaking windows, shutting down campuses, forcing the cancellation of classes and graduations. None of this is a peaceful protest," Biden said referring to the Gaza solidarity protests at Columbia University on May 2. "Smashing windows with hammers and taking over university buildings is not free speech. It is lawlessness," Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer had said a few days earlier.

Not only are their characterisations of what has occurred at Columbia and dozens of other universities just plain wrong, but their words sound like they may have been lifted directly from Richard Nixon's famous "Silent Majority" speech from 1968. "When the nation with the greatest tradition of the rule of law is plagued by unprecedented lawlessness," Nixon had said then, "when the President of the United States cannot travel abroad or to any major city at home without fear of a hostile demonstration – then it's time for new leadership for the United States of America."

Democrats today are sounding like the Republicans of the past for one simple reason: both parties have moved significantly to the right in the past 50 years.

Indeed, since Nixon's time in power, administrations from both parties pushed for laws and policies

that favoured corporations over working people and created the conditions for "dark money" to shape and dominate American politics. They allowed large corporations and the billionaire set to avoid paying their fair share in taxes, deepening inequality and enhancing societal divisions.

Now and again, the Democrats did criticise the Republicans for their ruthlessness on social welfare entitlements and public spending, but they always supported the annual near-trillion-dollar defence appropriation with enthusiasm, exposing their right-wing tendencies.

Democratic leaders still talk about "empathy" and how they "feel the pain" of everyday Americans. They still claim to be the party of democracy and justice – the only force that could "protect" America from the increasing authoritarianism of Trump's far-right Republicans. But their continued military and political backing of Israel's apartheid regime amid its war on Gaza and insistent characterisation of antiwar protests as a national security threat says more about their priorities, and approach to justice and democracy, than any of their speeches.

And its approach to the war in Gaza and protests against it in the US is just one issue among many that underscores the Democratic Party's massive leap towards the right.

Take reproductive rights. President Donald Trump's appointment of three anti-abortion justices to the Supreme Court may be the immediate cause of the Dobbs decision (2022) that overturned Roe v Wade (1973). Yet it was the failure of Democratic majorities in Congress under Presidents Carter, Clinton, and Obama to codify reproductive rights in the 1970s, 90s, and 2000s that paved the way for the eventual dissolution of women's reproductive rights in this country.

The same is true about climate change mitigation. Sure, Biden once promoted a national climate change initiative that has included a ban on oil and fossil fuel drilling for more than 40 percent of the National Petroleum Reserve in Alaska. But he has also approved in 2023 the con-

Donald Earl Collins

troversial Willow oil-drilling project in Alaska's North Slope region, deep in the Arctic Circle. And despite Congress's passage of the Inflation Reduction Act of 2022, with \$500bn in tax incentives to make the US a zero-emissions nation by 2050, it will unlikely meet its initial 2030 goals, much less achieve carbon neutrality in 26 years. There are also several high-ranking Democrats, like Senator Joe Manchin, who do not want the US to take any meaningful action to mitigate the climate crisis, exposing the ever-expanding reach of right-wing positions within the party.

With the Democrats proudly assuming positions which were once reserved solely for the most right-wing Republicans, on issues ranging from foreign policy and climate change to social security and women's rights, the need for a third, left-wing party is obvious.

The US may be a historically right-leaning country which has consistently moved further to the right over the years, but this does not mean it is lacking truly left-wing voices.

There has always been a left, albeit fractured, in the US and it seems that constituency is growing and becoming more vocal. From the so-called "war on terror" to the Great Recession and the emergence of Trumpism, the last couple of decades of crises have radicalised many Americans and pushed a considerable number of them to assume solidly left-wing and even far-left stances. Leave it to a pandemic, economic recessions, the mainstreaming of the far right, and the ever-present threat of mass shootings and domestic terrorism to move a sizeable minority to see American society as one in need of a radical, social justice-oriented shift.

If these left-wing Americans – folks who unapologetically advocate for universal healthcare, universal basic income, prison and police abolition, against American-backed wars and for an aggressive climate change agenda – are to form a party that is electorally viable, they need to make some hard choices and major sacrifices.

If they want to see a truly left-wing party on the ballot

with a chance to win, first they will need to swallow their pride and help re-elect the "soft-right" Democrats in the upcoming elections. To build momentum towards a viable left-leaning third party, they need a US that is less autocratic than the one that would exist if Trump takes the oath of office again in 2025.

Second, they would need to forget their many differences and disagreements and unite for the greater good. Any movement to build a new party should bring together decidedly progressive politicians like Chokwe Antar Lumumba, mayor of Jackson, Mississippi, and Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights CEO Maya Wiley, with somewhat centre-left Democrat Representatives such as Rashida Tlaib and Ilhan Omar.

Building an American coalition among different left-wing factions, from Christian Democrats and Social Democrats to Democratic Socialists and Neo-Marxists, would not be easy. Left-wing infighting has long been a major obstacle in the way of building a viable, leftist third party in the US. Many radical leftists (like some in the Antifa movement) also stand in complete opposition to any political alliances to wrestle power away from Democrats and Republicans. For them, the system is simply too corrupt to participate in – it needs to be dismantled before something better is built in its place.

This, however, appears to be an impossible feat. Even under the worst of historical circumstances, like during the Great Depression, most Americans – though desperate, pro-union, and radicalised by the violence and poverty of those years – ultimately remained loyal to the two-party system.

Green Party is the only left-wing organisation that has had some minor success with its presidential candidates in recent history – Ralph Nader, for example, received almost three million votes under the Green ticket in 2000. Yet, even he did not come anywhere near real power.

Today, the Democratic Socialists, which count among their members Tlaib, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and several other state-level

representatives, is perhaps the left-wing movement with the highest chance of building momentum for a leftist coalition that can have real electoral success. Yet the movement's ongoing affiliation with the Democratic Party and its neoliberal policies like social welfare austerity and business deregulation also makes them unpalatable to many US leftists.

But the challenges ahead should not intimidate those who want to have a left-wing governance option in the US. Every viable party had to start somewhere. In the aftermath of President Lyndon Johnson's romp over Barry Goldwater in the 1964 election cycle, conservative insiders like Goldwater, William Buckley Jr, and Richard Nixon went ideological soul-searching. Through the formation of organisations like the American Conservative Union (the parent organisation for the Conservative Political Action Conference, or CPAC), new Republican National Committee agendas, and the perfection of the Southern Strategy, the GOP remade itself. The new Republicans welcomed the far-right Jim Crow segregationists who began joining the party in the wake of the Civil Rights Act of 1964's passage. Between Nixon, the Reagan Revolution, and the Contract with America, the GOP's transformation into a party of conservatives and palatable far-right fascists took three decades. Building a leftist third party from scratch, and uniting all left and centre-left factions behind it, before convincing enough Americans to vote for it, would take even longer.

Under the two-party system, this November Americans will be forced to make a choice between allowing the US to become a right-wing semi-fascist hell hole under Trump and his MAGA Republicans, or re-electing Biden and trying their chances with a smooth-talking but hypocritical, and at its core perhaps equally right-wing, administration. Under these circumstances, building a viable third party is necessary work. The alternative is a status quo that will ultimately sound the death knell for America's long-struggling democracy.

— Arab News

AI-augmented disinformation is NATO's new battlefield

Ylli Bajraktari

NATO'S summit in Washington this month will mark the 75th anniversary of the alliance's establishment — and it comes at a critical juncture. As threats to global stability evolve beyond conventional military domains, NATO must confront the barrage of disinformation undermining its unity and values. Specifically, member countries must prevent hostile authoritarian regimes from manipulating public opinion by leveraging technology to wage "cognitive warfare."

NATO's adversaries to undermine democratic processes and fuel political instability.

NATO countries must confront the threat of AI-augmented disinformation head-on. This requires moving beyond the current reactive approach, which focuses on debunking falsehoods. The alliance must develop a comprehensive collective defense doctrine that treats the information ecosystem as a key front in the battle to protect democratic societies.

Several key changes

ships with governments, private companies and civil society organizations. These partnerships should focus on developing shared standards, early-warning systems, coordinated responses to massive disinformation campaigns and mechanisms to trace and mitigate malign activities across multiple sovereign information environments. As the concerted effort to combat Russian disinformation about Ukraine demonstrates, continuous collaboration is vital.

Lastly, the best defense

To be sure, information warfare is not new. During the Cold War, NATO recognized and countered the Soviet Union's efforts to use propaganda and disinformation to weaken Western democracies. Since then, however, the digital revolution and subsequent rise of artificial intelligence have compounded the problem, enabling bad actors to produce and disseminate deepfakes and other forms of AI-augmented content at unprecedented speed and scale. While these powerful new tools can yield significant economic benefits, they can also be dangerous weapons. Hostile powers are already using disinformation against democracies to influence domestic public debate, drive polarization, erode trust in institutions and weaken their ability to address shared challenges. This significant election year, with half of the world's population casting ballots, creates a unique opportunity for NATO's adversaries to undermine democratic processes and fuel political instability. NATO countries must confront the threat of AI-augmented disinformation head-on. This requires moving beyond the current reactive approach, which focuses on debunking falsehoods. The alliance must develop a comprehensive collective defense doctrine that treats the information ecosystem as a key front in the battle to protect democratic societies. Several key changes are needed. First, NATO must develop the capability to monitor and analyze disinformation in real time. Investing in open-source intelligence tools and collaborating with tech companies is crucial to developing the necessary technical expertise to identify and counter malign influence campaigns. Specifically, NATO must invest in content authenticity and transparency tools — such as large language models, AI classifiers and natural language processing for sentiment analysis — that can identify AI-generated or altered content. Second, countering disinformation effectively requires fast, agile and far-reaching strategic communications.

Fittingly, the upcoming summit is expected to focus on the war in Ukraine and the need for NATO's collective defense framework to adapt to the realities of today's information ecosystem. Russia's war of aggression has revealed the scale of the threat posed by cognitive warfare, with the Kremlin orchestrating a massive social media campaign aimed at spreading false narratives, fueling anti-Western and anti-democratic sentiment and undermining NATO's greatest strength: its unity.

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Second, countering disinformation effectively requires fast, agile and far-reaching strategic communications. To this end, NATO must proactively promote its interests and mission, highlight the failures of authoritarian regimes and offer its own positive narrative.

But to do this effectively, NATO must also take the battle to its adversaries' information ecosystems. By actively highlighting the malign activities of authoritarian regimes on their own digital platforms, NATO could undermine autocrats' narratives and expose their tactics. At the same time, amplifying independent voices in these domains could create a powerful multiplier effect, fostering greater resilience against propaganda and disinformation.

Third, because disinformation campaigns transcend national borders, countering them will require NATO to establish collaborative relation-

consists of fostering informed, critical-thinking populations. By supporting programs that promote media and digital literacy, like those already in place in Finland, NATO could help build societal resilience against propaganda and voter manipulation.

To implement this strategy, NATO will also require new organizational structures. For starters, the alliance should establish a disinformation unit responsible for coordinating intelligence, spearheading counter-messaging efforts and building strategic partnerships. Such a unit could leverage the Five Eyes intelligence alliance (comprising the US, the UK, Australia, New Zealand and Canada), as well as the work of Europol — the EU's law enforcement agency — to bolster and expand information-sharing networks.

Given the threat posed by the emerging "axis of disruptors" — comprising China, Russia, Iran and North Korea — NATO must combine its military prowess with equally sophisticated mechanisms to protect its members' information systems against cognitive warfare. Member countries should use the upcoming Washington summit to make this approach a top priority. Confronting disinformation is not just about protecting the integrity of public debate, it is also about defending the very foundations of freedom and security. It is an opportunity we cannot afford to miss, because what is at stake is a battle we cannot afford to lose.

— Project Syndicate

Climate change's outsized impact on North Africa

Zaid M. Belbagi

NORTH Africa is one of the regions most affected by climate change globally, with summer temperatures predicted to rise by 4 degrees Celsius over the next 50 years. Conventionally exposed to more than 3,000 hours of sunlight each year, North Africa is today witnessing prolonged heat waves, which are exacerbated by acute water shortages, higher sea levels and rising desertification.

The challenges posed by climate change cut across sectors and, today, the region is both heating up and drying much faster than the global average. This has limited the ability of North African states to maintain water and food security and sustain infrastructure development to generate economic opportunities.

Water shortages have become a defining feature of the socioeconomic environment in North Africa in recent years. In Morocco, repeated droughts are creating unprecedented water stress that could reach lethal levels by 2040. Currently, the country's supply of renewable water per capita stands at 620 cubic meters per year, which is far below the 1,000 cubic meters threshold for water scarcity. Egypt shares this challenge, with the UN predicting that it could run out of water as soon as 2025.

Owing to a combination of pollution, dams, increased demand for its water and the gradual drying up of its main source, Lake Victoria, the Nile River today holds much less water than its normal capacity and this lifeline for Egypt is expected to continue drying up for years to come. At the same time, the country is facing a predicted sea level rise of 50 centimeters by 2100, which would submerge 2 million hectares of arable land and displace 8 million people. Similarly, Tunisia and Algeria only have about 400 and 300 cubic meters of annual renewable water per capita, respectively, which is signif-

icantly below the scarcity level and is putting tremendous pressure on these states to maintain a continuous water supply to households. These North African states also bear the brunt of an alarming rate of desertification, with more than 75 percent of land in these countries likely to become arid due to sustained droughts and unpredictable rainfall.

Water shortages have become a defining feature of the socioeconomic environment in North Africa in recent years. In Morocco, repeated droughts are creating unprecedented water stress that could reach lethal levels by 2040. Currently, the country's supply of renewable water per capita stands at 620 cubic meters per year, which is far below the 1,000 cubic meters threshold for water scarcity. Egypt shares this challenge, with the UN predicting that it could run out of water as soon as 2025. Owing to a combination of pollution, dams, increased demand for its water and the gradual drying up of its main source, Lake Victoria, the Nile River today holds much less water than its normal capacity and this lifeline for Egypt is expected to continue drying up for years to come. At the same time, the country is facing a predicted sea level rise of 50 centimeters by 2100, which would submerge 2 million hectares of arable land and displace 8 million people.

This is a direct threat to livelihoods in the region, as the resultant infertility of the land will challenge conventional agricultural productivity, which forecasts show will fall by up to 30 percent by 2050.

Such climatic conditions have significantly increased food prices in the region over the past decade. Between 2019 and 2022, for example, Algeria witnessed a 12.2 percent reduction in food affordability. When combined with disruptions in the global food supply chain, the price of essential grains and crops is expected to continue rising. The food insecurity and unemployment that will be a consequence of these developments will aggravate exist-

ing social grievances. The eruption of riots in central Algeria last month due to sustained water insecurity indicates the tipping point that the region is approaching as citizens face economic pressures from all sides.

This is impacting development in a more tangible way than ever before.

Climate migration, an increasingly global challenge, is now a reality in North Africa, with close to 20 million people in the region projected to be internally displaced due to the impacts of climate change on agricultural productivity and water levels. The region already has one of the highest rates of urbanization globally, with urban populations expected to grow to above 75 percent by 2050, up from just 35 percent in the early 1960s and about 60 percent in 2018.

This is largely a result of the concentration of economic development in the region's urban centers, which also tend to be located along the coast. Given the increasingly adverse cli-

matic conditions, people in rural communities are seeking opportunities to move to urban areas to access economic opportunities and resources.

Therefore, climate change poses multifaceted challenges to North Africa's urban centers. While climate displacement will increase urban populations and, in turn, raise pressure

also taken a toll on the region's native nomadic tribes. The ancient nomadic lifestyle of such communities faces the challenge of prolonged droughts and water shortages, as insecure water supply has made it difficult for them to maintain the livestock that they carry for subsistence, meaning they are increasingly forced to settle in villages and towns. The loss of traditional nomadic communities is therefore leading to a notable cultural erosion in North Africa.

North Africa's contribution to global carbon emissions is meager, yet it faces an outsized impact as a result of climate change and global warming. While much of climate mitigation is a long-term and multilateral effort, North African countries can begin the process by strengthening the necessary policies on water management, desalination, reduction of industrial emissions, reforestation and sustainable agriculture.

Desalination, in particular, is a desirable option for water-stressed countries and has been a successful strategy in other regions such as the Gulf. However, this is only a temporary solution. Countries in the region would also benefit from the creation of climate-resilient infrastructure outside of traditional urban centers in order to distribute the population load and reduce the pressure on urban resources.

Given the expensive and scientifically advanced nature of these efforts, the international community must assist the countries of North Africa in their climate mitigation strategies, as adverse conditions in the region will in turn impact neighboring countries in the form of migration and increased dependence on food imports. The region must be supported with climate financing and knowledge transfer to develop drought-resistant agriculture, water harnessing, advanced early-warning systems and biodiversity conservation methodologies.

In a wider change to the social makeup of these states, climate change has



Implementation of Safe City Project: SCCI assures full support to KP Police

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: In order to improve the security in the provincial metropolis, Sarhad Chamber of Commerce and Industry assured the provincial government and police department to extend financial and technical support in implementation of the Safe City Project.

The assurance was given by senior vice president of the chamber Sanaullah Khan while chairing a meeting during a visit of Chief Capital Police Office Peshawar Qasim Ali Khan here at the chamber on Wednesday.

Sanaullah Khan suggested forming a joint liaison committee between chamber and police department to promptly resolve traders' community issues.

He asserted that a peaceful atmosphere is crucial for promotion of business and trade activities.

He assured the traders community will fully coop-

erate with police during the Muharram.

The meeting was attended by vice president of the chamber Ejaz Khan Afridi, former FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour, SSP Operations Kashif Zulfiqar, SP City Zafar Ahmad, police high officials, former presidents of the SCCI Riaz Arshad, Faiz Muhammad Faizi, former vice president Javed Akhtar, Haji Abdul Jalil Jan, member of executive committee Kashif Amin, Hamza Ibrahim Butt, Fahad Amin, Muhammad Ismail Khan, Anjuman e Tajran Peshawar president Haji Shukat Khan, Tajir Insaf President Shahid Khan, Haji Naseer, Khalid Ayub, and Waqar Ahmad, Nadeem Rauf, Ashfaq Ahmad, Aftab Iqbal, Ihsanullah, Mujebur Rehman, Abdul Razaq Chitrali, Saddam Gul, Faiz Rasool, Ishtiaq Muhammad, acting secretary general of the SCCI Muqtasid Ahsan, Secretary Sohail Anjum,

presidents, general secretaries and office bearers of Shoba, Qissa Khawani, Kohati, Namak Mandi, Ghanta Ghar, and city bazaars and markets associations in a large number.

Sanaullah on occasion apprised the meeting about concerns of traders' community regarding increasing incidents of street crime, snatching and extortion and assured full support financially and technically for execution of Safe City Project in Peshawar.

Senior office bearers presented a number of proposals for improving security and traffic system and resolution of the business community issues on which the CCPO fully agreed.

Senior police officials assured police would take initiatives as per recommendation of the Sarhad chamber to resolve traders' community issues.

Meeting addressed by Ghazanfar Bilour, Shaukat Khan, Habibullah, Javed

Akhtar and office bearers of various Peshawar' trade unions, bazaar and market associations and gave full assurance to police for cooperation during Muharram and presented number of proposals for resolution of issues.

CCPO while responding to various queries from participants of the meeting asked the chamber to present the business community in written and assured proactive steps would be taken to resolve them.

He said the business community always extended cooperation in maintenance of law and order during Muharram and confidently said traders would continue their support for peaceful observance of Muharram this year.

Ghazanfar Bilour also spoke on the occasion and thanked the CCPO and other high officials for assurance in resolving the business community on priority basis.



PESHAWAR: Senior Vice President SCCI Sanaullah Khan and Vice President SCCI Ejaz Khan Afridi presenting a shield to CCPO Peshawar Qasim Ali Khan at Chamber's House.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Shipping activity was report at the port where two ships, Hanyu Camellia and Al-Salam-II carrying Chemicals and Gas oil, berthed at Engro Terminal and Oil Terminal respectively on Tuesday. Meanwhile, four more ships, MSC Fie X, Nave Andromeda, CMB Jordaens and Marangas Asclepius carrying Container, Mogas, Coal and LNG also arrived at outer-anchorage of the Port Qasim on during last 24 hours.

A total of seven ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them Liquefied Natural Gas carrier Al-Deebal' left the port on today morning while four more ships, Hanyu Camellia, Maersk Bering, Al-Salam-II and Alora are expected to sail on today.

Cargo volume of 84,458 tonnes, comprising 79,182 tonnes imports cargo and 5,276 tonnes export cargo was handled at the port during last 24 hours.

There are 08 ships at Outer Anchorage of Port Qasim, out of them six ships, Bitumen Kosei, Mulberry Express, Hafnia Turquoise, Marangas Asclepius, CMB Jordaens and MSC FIE-X & two more ships, W-Kyrenia and Maersk Cape Town scheduled to load/offload Bitumen, Palm oil, Mogas, LNG, Coal and Container are expected to take berths at respectively MW-1, LCT, FOTCO, EETL, PIBT and QICT on today 03rd July, while three more container ships, X-Press Altair, MSC Positano and San-Francisco-Bridge are due to arrive at Port Qasim on Thursday.

Exports up by 10.54%

ISLAMABAD (APP): The exports from the country witnessed an increase of 10.54 percent during the fiscal year 2023-24 as compared to the corresponding period of last year 2022-23, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) reported.

The exports during July-June (2023-24) were recorded at \$30.645 billion against the exports of \$27.724 billion, according to latest PBS data.

On the other hand, imports into the country declined by 0.84 percent to \$54.734 billion this year against the imports of \$55.198 billion last year.

Based on the figures, the trade deficit during the current fiscal year under review was recorded at \$24.089 billion against the deficit of \$27.474 billion last year, showing a decline of 12.32 percent.

Meanwhile, on a year-on-year basis, the exports from the country increased by 7.34 percent in June 2024 compared to the exports of the same month of last year. The exports during the month were recorded at \$2.529 billion as against the exports of \$2.356 billion in June 2023.

On the other hand, the imports during June 2024 were recorded at \$4.919 billion compared to the imports of \$4.189 billion in June 2023, showing an increase of 17.43 percent, according to the data.

On a month-on-month basis, the exports from the country decreased by 10.92 percent when compared to the exports of \$2.839 billion during May 2024.

PSX closes at high level of 80,233 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The 100-index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) continued with bullish trend on Wednesday, gaining 680.78 points, a positive change of 0.86 percent, closing at historic level of 80,233.67 points against 79,522.89 points the previous trading day.

A total of 536,580,866 shares were traded during the day as compared to 413,153,249 shares the previous day, whereas the price of shares stood at Rs 22,722 billion against Rs 16,597 billion on the last trading day.

Around 447 companies transacted their shares in the stock market, 256 of them recorded gains and 135 sustained losses, whereas the share price of 56 companies remained unchanged.

The three top trading companies were Pak Elektron with 34,586,757 shares at Rs 26.75 per share, B.O. Punjab with 31,468,760 shares at Rs 5.40 per share and National Bank XD with 21,224,492 shares at Rs 44.33 per share.

Nestle Pakistan Limited witnessed a maximum increase of Rs 129.41 per

share price, closing at Rs 7,060.41, whereas the runner-up was Philip Morris (Pakistan) Limited with a Rs 54.80 rise in its per share price to Rs 663.71.

Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited witnessed a maximum decrease of Rs 134.99 per share closing at Rs 18,162.50, followed by Rafhan Maize Production Company Limited with a Rs 82.36 decline to close at Rs 7,517.64.

Rupee weakens against dollar

Exchange rate of the Pakistan rupee depreciated by 03 paisa against the US dollar in the interbank trading on Wednesday and closed at Rs 278.40 against the previous day's closing of Rs278.37.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the dollar in the open market, however, were Rs 277.9 and Rs 280.7 respectively.

The price of the Euro increased by Rs 1.19 to close at Rs 299.58 against the last day's closing of Rs 298.39, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

The Japanese yen remained unchanged and

closed at Rs 1.72, whereas an increase of Rs 1.92 was witnessed in the exchange rate of the British Pound, which was traded at Rs 353.37 as compared to the last day's closing of Rs 351.45.

The exchange rates of the Emirates Dirham and the Saudi Riyal increased by 01 paisa each to close at Rs 75.80 and Rs 74.21 respectively.

Gold rates up by Rs800 per tola to Rs242,300

The price of per tola of 24 karat gold increased by Rs.800 and was sold at Rs.242,300 on Wednesday against its sale at Rs.241,500 on last trading day.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also increased by Rs.686 to Rs.207,733 from Rs. 207,047 whereas that of 10 gram 22 karat gold went up to Rs.190,422 from Rs. 189,793, the All Sindh Sarafa Jewellers Association reported.

The price of per tola and ten gram silver remained constant at Rs.2,850 and Rs.2,443.41 respectively.

The price of gold in the international market increased by \$21 to \$2,345 from \$2,324, the Association reported.

PCJCCI keen on strengthening academia-CPEC linkages

LAHORE (APP): The Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Wednesday showed keen interest in strengthening academia-CPEC linkages.

Sharing his view at a think-tank session, held here at PCJCCI Secretariat, the joint chamber's President Moazzam Ghurki highlighted that CPEC not only benefits the economy and bilateral trade between the two countries but it also offers opportunity for Pakistan to adopt and access more policies to strengthen the educational sector of the country.

He added that throughout the world, the developing economies are struggling for the better progress

and advancement of the education sector for rational economic growth and substantial development. In poverty stricken array, Pakistan and the Ministry of Education (MoE) can reinvestigate policies to meet the educational challenges in the country.

PCJCCI Senior Vice President Fang Yulong said that China's magnificent expansion and progressions in the latest research and development and the invention are remarkable and stunning. Globally in 2008, China surpassed Japan in R&D expenditures; and the scientific research productivity of China is also increasing. Thus, the global rise of China as 'Asian Dragon' is the achievement

of educational and technological standards of the China education system that is producing competitive manpower according to national and international market demand. Therefore CPEC provides an opportunity for Pakistan to inter-link physically with the biggest economy of the world.

Secretary General Salahuddin Hanif said that new programmes for the youth should be initiated as per the demand of the market. He added, "Our chamber provides a platform to sign and promote academic linkages between Pakistan and China." He hoped that CPEC would create immense employment opportunities in the province.

First half of 2024: World's most valuable firms satisfy investors

ISTANBUL (APP): Global equity markets broke record after record in the first half of the year as nine of the world's top 10 firms with the highest capitalization satisfied investors.

Global risk appetite was influenced by expectations that the fight against inflation worldwide was coming to a close and that tight monetary policies would gradually loosen.

Stock markets were pushed to record highs on estimations that world economies would be able to overcome the fight against inflation without recessions and that corporate profitability would remain strong.

The world's most valuable company changed several times in the first half of the year, though Windows maker Microsoft remained on top at the end of June.

In the top 10, Microsoft

was followed by Apple, Nvidia, Alphabet (Google), Amazon, Saudi Aramco, Meta Platforms, Taiwan Semiconductor Manufacturing Company (TSMC), Berkshire Hathaway and Eli Lilly.

Microsoft dominated in the top spot in the first six months of the year with a value of \$3.321 trillion and was above Apple and Nvidia as of last Friday, the final trading day of June.

Apple followed Microsoft with \$3.229 trillion in value, after which came Nvidia with \$3.038 trillion.

The rest in the top 10 were Alphabet (Google) with \$2.258 trillion, Amazon with \$2.011 trillion, Saudi Aramco with \$1.788 trillion, Meta Platforms with \$1.278 trillion, TSMC with \$901.4 billion, Berkshire Hathaway with \$877.88

billion and Eli Lilly with \$815.2 billion.

US-based artificial intelligence (AI) chip-maker Nvidia was the best-performing company in the share markets among the top 10, as its stock price skyrocketed by 149.5% to \$123.54 since January.

Taiwanese semiconductor maker TSMC followed Nvidia, as its stock price rose 67.1%, while the shares of pharmaceutical firm Eli Lilly gained 55.3%.

Facebook parent Meta Platforms was in fourth spot among the top 10 most valuable firms, as its stock price climbed 42.5% in January-June, reaching \$504.22.

Meanwhile, Alphabet (Google) shares rose by 30.2% to \$183.42, Amazon by 27.2% to \$193.25, and Microsoft by 18.9% to \$446.95.

AHL joins SLIC as key distribution partner for insurance solutions



F.P. Report

KARACHI: State Life Insurance Corporation of Pakistan (SLIC) and Arif Habib Limited (AHL) have teamed up in a first-of-its-kind partnership between an insurance company and an investment house to promote an insurance and savings culture. At a signing ceremony held at AHL's Karachi headquarters, SLIC and AHL formalized their partnership where AHL will facilitate the dis-

tribution of SLIC's best in class insurance products and services. The agreement was signed by Shoaib Javed Hussain, CEO of SLIC and Shahid Ali Habib, CEO of AHL.

Shoaib Javed highlighted the significance of the partnership, stating, "SLIC has always been at the forefront in transforming the insurance sector. It is a pleasure to announce the strategic partnership between AHL and SLIC as it brings together two leading organizations

with a shared vision of enduring inclusion and protection for the people of Pakistan across all strata of society with the goal of increasing economic activity".

Shahid Ali Habib, said that "This partnership represents a strategic collaboration between State Life and Arif Habib, with the aim of spreading awareness and providing access of insurance products to the general public to protect them financially against any unforeseen events and also con-

tribute to the deepening of financial markets. We are confident that using the extensive distribution network of Arif Habib Ltd, State Life will penetrate further into the domestic market."

Nasim Beg, Director at AHL, quoted "While an increasing number of people are accessing the capital market to create portfolios blending equity, debt and more recently real estate investments, insurance products designed to match the savings objective are yet to be discovered. I am most excited to see State Life and AHL team up towards offering the savers the additional benefit of suitable insurance products."

This collaboration looks to make insurance more accessible and effective for Pakistanis, contributing to the nation's economic growth and resilience. State Life's insurance solutions include the Golden Endowment Plan, Jeevan Saathi Plan, Child and Education Plan, Endowment Plan, Three Payment Plan, and the Sadabahar Plan, aiming to empower customers with financial protection options for securing their future and that of their loved ones.

Markets track Wall St records as Powell revives rate hopes

HONG KONG (AFP/APP): Asian and European stocks rose Wednesday following fresh records on Wall Street after Federal Reserve chief Jerome Powell fanned hopes of an interest rate cut by saying the battle against inflation had made "progress" and the job market was cooling.

After a run of above-

forecast data and warnings from central bank officials suggesting monetary policy would remain elevated for some time, the remarks provided fresh optimism that a reduction -- and possibly two -- was on the way before the end of the year.

Still, that was not enough to boost the euro against the dollar as traders fret over weekend polls in France that could see the far-right take power, which some warn could put the European Union's second-biggest economy on a collision course with the bloc.

Speaking at a forum in Portugal on central bank-

ing, Powell said the Fed had "made quite a bit of progress in bringing inflation back down to our (two percent) target, while the labour market has remained strong and growth has continued". "We want that process to continue."

He also pointed to "substantial" work on softening the labour market, a key target among decision-makers. Key non-farm payrolls report will be closely followed Friday, with investors hoping for a slowdown in hiring that could give the Fed room to cut.

Powell said the two percent goal could possibly be reached "maybe late next year" or in 2026. The consumer price index came in at 3.3 percent in May, having peaked at a four-decade high above nine percent in 2022.

Futures traders believe there is a roughly 70 percent chance of a rate cut by mid-September, while it is more likely than not that it will make a second cut by the end of the year, according to CME Group data.

The prospect of borrowing costs finally coming down from their 23-year highs in a few months helped push Wall Street higher, with the S&P ending above 5,500 points for

Name Correction

My correct name is Muzammil Khan while mistakenly written in my educational documents as Muzamil. Please make the required correction as Muzammil Khan S/o Noor Shad Ghulam R/o Police Colony Peshawar.

Court Notice

In the Court of Sidra Jalal Civil Judge-III/Judicial Magistrate-II, Matta, Swat. Case No. 205/1. Institution 14/11/2023. Next hearing date 06/07/2024. Sahibzada Vs. Shah Kameen etc. Notice to defendant (2) Shahib Zameen son Sher Zameen, (7) Messen Zadgai daughter of Sher Muhammad Khan Heirs # 8, (8/1) Sajida w/o Abdul Naeem r/o Peochar, (8/2) Bibi Noor w/o Saif Ullah r/o Shakardara, (8/3) Sumaiya w/o sir Zameen r/o Sukhara, (8/4) Biameen w/o Saeed Ali r/o Bedara, (8/5) Bacha Batt widow Shams-ud-Din, (8/6) Spogmai, (8/7) Mian Saeed Umar, (8/8) Muhammad Umar, (8/10) Shah Faisal, (8/11) Abdul Aziz sons Shams-ud-Din r/o Peochar. In above mentioned case the respondent can't be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if said respondents will not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:00 a.m. dated 06/07/2024. Ex-parte proceeding will be held against the mentioned respondents under my hand and seal of this Court.

Court Notice

In the Court of Jauhar Ali Safi Civil Judge-I/Alaqa Qazi Buner at Daggar, Suit No. 592/1. Institution 7/12/2023. Date of hearing 15/7/2024. Hamed Rasol etc. Vs. Mian Syed Dost etc. Notice to No. (8) Shafiuallah Khan, (9) Ziaullah Khan sons of Nasozay resident of Elai Buner, (36/1) Malak Adnan Khan s/o Said Ahmed Khan resident of Sultanwas Buner, (39) Zafsr Sani s/o Jowhar Daggar Kalay, (47) Mohamad Ghani, (51) Bakht Mohamad, (52) Mumtaz Ahmed s/o Gul Ahmed resident of Elai Buner at present abroad. Whereas in the above mentioned case the mentioned defendants cannot be served in the ordinary way, it is, therefore, proclaimed that if the said defendants will/shall not appear personally or through dually authorized agent or pleader in the court at 8:00 a.m. dated 15/7/2024 the proceeding will be taken ex-parte. Given under my hand and seal of this Court.



In brief

Eric Poujade dies at 51

PARIS (AFP): French gymnast Eric Poujade, Olympic silver medallist on the pommel horse at the Sydney Olympics in 2000, died last weekend aged 51, the French Gymnastics Federation announced on Wednesday. Poujade also took silver on the pommel at the 1994 and 1997 world championships and won both pommel and team gold at the 1998 European championships in St Petersburg. The federation said Poujade had "left his mark on the history of the discipline" but gave no cause of death. "The world of gymnastics today loses a great champion and an elegant servant", said federation president, James Bateau. Poujade took silver in Sydney behind Romania's Marius Urzica ending a 16-year medal drought for France's gymnasts at the Olympics -- Philippe Vatuone won bronze in the floor discipline in Los Angeles in 1984.

Murray teams up with Raducanu

LONDON (AFP): Andy Murray is teaming up with Emma Raducanu at Wimbledon in an eye-catching all-British mixed doubles pairing as part of his farewell to the tournament. The pair were Wednesday granted a wild card just a day after Murray, 37, pulled out of the singles due to his failure to regain full fitness following a back operation. The two-time Wimbledon singles champion will also play men's doubles with his brother Jamie at the All England Club, with the pair launching their campaign on Centre Court on Thursday. The mixed doubles event starts the following day. Murray played mixed doubles with Serena Williams in 2019, making it to the third round, but it will be a Grand Slam debut in doubles for Raducanu. The 21-year-old floated the idea of teaming up with Murray two years ago, telling the BBC: "We haven't actually spoken about it but it's something we feel we both want to do." Asked following her first-round singles win on Monday about Murray's influence on her, Raducanu, US Open champion in 2021, said: "I think the biggest advice is just how he's always taken care of his operations, how he manages his people. "I haven't really spoken to him so much. I think for me it's just watching him operate day to day, watching him be absolutely on it with everything. Even in practice now he's so on it to the minute." Murray and Raducanu face a tough opening round contest against Marcelo Arevalo and Zhang Shuai. Arevalo last month won the men's doubles title for the second time at the French Open while Zhang is also a two-time Grand Slam doubles champion.

Everton sign Ndiaye

LONDON (AFP): Everton on Wednesday announced the signing of Marseille forward Iliman Ndiaye on a five-year deal for a reported fee of around £15 million (\$19 million). The 24-year-old is the club's third signing during the transfer window after winger Jack Harrison returned on a season-long loan from Leeds and Aston Villa midfielder Tim Iroegbunam arrived on a permanent deal. Ndiaye moved to France last year from Sheffield United after scoring 14 goals in their promotion-winning Championship campaign of 2022/23. But he found the net just four times in 46 appearances for Ligue 1 team Marseille. "I'm so excited. I want to come in and carry on from the team's progress last season," the Senegal international told Everton TV. "I feel like I'll be ready to help and I just want to give it my all to get this club higher up the table."



LONDON: Emma Raducanu of Great Britain celebrates during the Women's Singles second round match against Elise Mertens of Belgium during day three of The Championships Wimbledon 2024.

PCB schedules Pak vs India Champions Trophy match for March 1

LAHORE (Monitoring Desk): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has scheduled a high-profile Champions Trophy encounter between Pakistan and their fierce rivals India to be held in Lahore on March 1 next year, according to India's news agency Press Trust of India (PTI).

According to a senior ICC Board member who spoke to PTI, the BCCI has not yet provided their approval for the proposed schedule. The Champions Trophy is planned to take place from February 19 to March 9, with March 10 designated as a Reserve Day.

It is believed that PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi who attended the T20 World Cup final in

Barbados as an invitee, has submitted a schedule consisting of 15 matches. All of India's games have been allocated to Lahore, citing security and logistical considerations.

"The PCB has submitted the draft of the 15-match ICC Champions Trophy. Seven games in Lahore, three in Karachi and five in Rawalpindi," an ICC Board member said.

"The opening match will be held in Karachi with two semifinals in Karachi and Rawalpindi, final in Lahore. All India matches (including semifinal if the team qualifies) in Lahore," the source added.

India find themselves in Group A, alongside their traditional rivals Pakistan, as well as

Bangladesh and New Zealand. Meanwhile, Group B features cricketing powerhouses Australia, South Africa, England, and the rising Afghanistan team.

In a recent development, Chris Tetley, the ICC head of events, held a meeting with Mohsin Naqvi in Islamabad. This meeting took place following a comprehensive inspection of the venues and other arrangements by the ICC's security team.

Pakistan's most recent experience hosting a major cricketing event was the Asia Cup in 2023. The tournament was conducted using a unique 'Hybrid Model' due to the Indian government's refusal to allow its players

to travel across the border into Pakistan. As a result, India's matches were played in Sri Lanka, while the rest of the tournament took place in Pakistan.

"All board chiefs of the ICC Champions Trophy participating countries (minus BCCI) have assured him of their complete support but BCCI will consult its government and update the ICC," the source added.

The ICC finds itself in a challenging position, as it lacks the authority to compel any cricket board to act in opposition to its government's directives. The BCCI is faced with a complex decision, and the cricketing world eagerly awaits its final stance on the issue.

Cavendish makes Tour de France history with 35th stage win



SAINT-VULBAS (AFP): Mark Cavendish made Tour de France history on Wednesday winning a record 35th stage at the age of 39.

Briton Cavendish beat Eddy Merckx's mark, which had stood since 1975, on the fifth stage of this year's Tour near the Alps having equalled it in 2021.

"It's my 15th Tour de France and it takes a lot to get here, getting in shape every year," Cavendish said at the line.

"I'm surrounded by incredible people and I owe a lot to them" added Cavendish who made his Tour debut in 2008 before becoming world road race champion three years later.

As the peloton swept through the lush Rhone valley with vineyards and

pretty villages skirting the river his Astana team hogged the front right of the peloton as light rain fell.

A long home straight in the tiny village of Saint-Vulbas helped them form a lead out train the 'Manx Missile' mastered as he powered across the finish line well ahead of Belgian Jasper Philipsen, last year's sprint points green jersey winner.

Race leader and two-time former winner Tadej Pogacar almost hit a traffic island causing a wave of movement and a pile up of bikes and bodies behind him.

But the Slovenian preferred to focus on Cavendish after the race.

"I used to watch him on television and we loved him," Pogacar said. "Just back there I saw him and he

said hey, don't you go breaking my record," he jokingly added.

Pogacar is 25-years-old and has 12 stage wins already.

He still leads the overall standings which he enjoyed with a full yellow kit while Belgian Remco Evenepoel remains second at 45sec with defending champion Jonas Vingegaard third at 50sec.

Biniam Girmay, who became the first black African to win a Tour stage in Turin on Sunday took the sprint points green jersey on Wednesday after coming ninth in Saint-Vulbas.

Cavendish took a moment to congratulate the Eritrean sprinter.

"Biniam set a record in Turin and now I've set one here," he said.

"So much goes into this and even one stage can make your career," he added.

In 2023 Cavendish left the Tour in an ambulance after a banal crash bamboozled his plans.

Two seasons previously when Cavendish equalled Merckx's stage haul in Carcassonne, it was his fourth win on that edition racing for Quick Step after years in the wilderness suffering from Epstein Barr virus.

He missed out on a 35th stage on the Champs Elysees coming second and then missed the cut for the 2022 Tour as Quick Step picked Fabio Jakobsen 10 years his junior.

Cavendish joined Astana in 2023 before being persuaded to sign a one-year contract extension for this season having considered retiring.

Costa Rica beat Paraguay but exit Copa America as Colombia, Brazil advance

AUSTIN (Agencies): Costa Rica scored two early goals to beat Paraguay 2-1 in their final Copa America Group D match on Tuesday but failed to move into the quarter-finals after finishing third following Brazil's 1-1 draw with Colombia.

Colombia finished as group winners with seven points while Brazil also advanced as runners-up with five.

Costa Rica return home with four points while Paraguay exit after three losses. "This was a very tough group.

We were playing against Brazil and Colombia, two of the four favourites to win the Copa," Costa Rica coach Gustavo Alfaro told reporters.

"We had our strengths, our achievements and our mistakes, but we grew and we're analysing the performance rather than the



results. "The important thing is that we learn and that this was a very short tournament that we had to seize to the fullest."

Costa Rica needed results to go their way along with a big swing in goal difference to qualify and they wasted no time getting on the board when skipper Francisco Calvo and Josimar Alcocer made it 2-0 inside seven minutes. Calvo headed home

from the edge of the six-yard box in the third minute while 19-year-old Alcocer powered past several players before pulling the trigger from well outside the box to beat the keeper.

But Paraguay came to life in the second half and Costa Rica's hopes of qualifying dwindled 10 minutes after the restart when Ramon Sosa scored his first goal for his country.

Costa Rica's defence could do nothing as Mathias Villasanti dribbled into the box and set up Sosa, who blasted the ball into the top corner past the outstretched hand of goalkeeper Patrick Sequeira.

Costa Rica nearly conceded again from a corner in added time, the ball deflecting off Fabian Balbuena's head to Angel Romero but his shot failed to make it past the fingertips of Sequeira. It marked the first time since 1925 that Paraguay had lost all of their group matches.

"It was a bad tournament, a bad performance," coach Daniel Gamero said. Speaking about his future, he added: "I am here because the association requested my services and if they don't want me to continue, that is their decision. I'll have to discuss that with them."

Alcaraz coasts into Wimbledon third round

LONDON (Agencies): Defending champion Carlos Alcaraz recovered from an early stumble to sweep into the third round of Wimbledon on Wednesday, dispatching Australia's Aleksandar Vukic in straight sets.

The third seed dug deep to take the opening set against his 69th-ranked opponent before shifting impressively through the gears to win 7-6 (7/5), 6-2, 6-2. From 5-2 up in the first set, the Spaniard briefly lost his way to trail 5-6.

However, with the pressure on, Alcaraz broke back to force a tie-break and from then on it was one-way traffic. The 21-year-old broke twice in the second set and repeated the feat in set three, pounding a total of 42 winners. Alcaraz, who beat Novak Djokovic in last year's Wimbledon final, wrapped up victory in one hour, 48 minutes. Vukic defeated then 17-year-old Alcaraz in qualifying at Roland Garros in 2020 but could not repeat the feat on the grass at the All England Club.

"I'm really happy about my performance today," said Alcaraz. "The first set was the key for me. He served for the set, then I played a really good tie-break. "In the second set and third set, I played a really high level so I'm really happy about it."

The three-time Grand Slam champion is bidding to become just the sixth man after Rod Laver, Bjorn Borg, Roger Federer, Rafael Nadal and Novak Djokovic to win the French Open and Wimbledon titles back to back. He next faces Frances Tiafoe, the American player he defeated in five sets in the semi-finals of the 2022 US Open on his way to his first Grand Slam triumph.

The Spaniard said he would "put on a show" against Tiafoe, ranked 29th. "I'm going for him," he said. "We played a really good match in the US Open. "I know he is a really talented player, a tough one, even tougher on grass with his style. Good volley, good slices. It is going

to be a very difficult match for me. "I'm ready to take that challenge."

Gauff storms past qualifier to reach third round: Coco Gauff stormed past Romanian qualifier Anca Todoni to move into the third round of Wimbledon.

The second seed entertained the crowd under the roof on Court One with big hitting to earn a 6-2 6-1 victory in 66 minutes. Gauff will play British qualifier Sonay Kartal, who claimed the biggest win of her career with victory over France's Clara Burel later on Wednesday. A second convincing win this week marks progress for American Gauff at SW19 after a surprise exit in the first round last year.

"Overall, I just learned about life a lot. I guess you do as you get older," the 20-year-old said. "I realised what I do, yes I'm passionate about, but it's not that serious and sometimes the world can make you feel like there's so much pressure, so much expectation.

"At the end of the day, it's a game, it's a sport and I'm very privileged to be playing out here." Todoni, 19, came into Wednesday's match on the back of a dominant win - and her first victory in a Grand Slam - over fellow qualifier Olga Danilovic, of Serbia.

But she faced a tougher opponent in US Open winner Gauff, who is among the favourites to go the distance at Wimbledon. After dropping serve early, Todoni couldn't make the most of any chances to break back. It was an uphill task from there for Todoni, who struggled to absorb Gauff's powerful ball striking and won just three points on her opponent's serve. American 11th seed Danielle Collins returned to complete a 6-3 7-6 (7-4) win over Denmark's Clara Tauson after their match was paused on Tuesday evening because of fading light and a slippery surface. Elina Svitolina, the 21st seed from Ukraine, moved past Poland's Magda Linette with a hard-fought 7-5 6-7 (9-11) 6-3 win.

Cricket Australia proposes hosting tri-series with Pakistan, India

KARACHI (Monitoring Desk): Cricket Australia (CA) Chief Executive Nick Hockley on Wednesday expressed the desire to host a tri-series involving arch-rivals Pakistan and India.

During a Zoom meeting with Pakistan and Indian media, Hockley acknowledged the hype around the clash between the neighbouring countries. He proposed hosting a triangular as well as a bilateral to help revive the series between the two nations.

"Pakistan and India are traditional rival teams;

there is a lot of excitement for their matches," said Hockley. "We are ready to support both teams for a bilateral and a tri-series."

"We would be happy to play a role in the revival of the Pakistan vs India bilateral series," he added.

It is worth noting that Pakistan and India haven't played a bilateral series since the 2013 ODI series due to the long-standing political tensions between the two neighbouring countries.

Since then both teams have played each other only in ICC events and Asia Cups. They recently squared

off in the high-octane T20 World Cup 2024 clash in New York, where India clinched a narrow victory.

"Nassau County Stadium [in New York] was a house full during the T20 World Cup [2024]. We witnessed a similar excitement at the T20 World Cup 2022 in Australia," stated Hockley.

However, the Cricket Australia chief was of the view that such plans could only become a reality if the respective cricket boards and governments of both countries co-ordinate on the matter.

Maham, Anisa to feature in WCC

ISLAMABAD (APP): Maham and Anisa would depart for Seoul, South Korea from Lahore on Thursday to represent Pakistan at the World Cycling Centre (WCC).

The Pakistan Cycling Federation (PCF) announced that Maham, a female cycling coach, and Anisa, a talented rider, from lyari karachi would represent Pakistan at the World Cycling Centre, said a press release.

Maham would participate in the UCI Level-II training program, further enhancing her coaching skills and expertise while

Anisa will showcase her cycling prowess at the international training course.

Maham Tariq performed outstandingly at the World Special Olympics in Germany, where she trained children from Pakistan.

Under her guidance, special children won four gold medals, four silver medals, and two bronze medals.

President Pakistan Cycling Federation, Syed Azhar Ali Shah, extended his best wishes to both Maham and Anisa. He reaffirmed PCF's commitment to providing full opportuni-

ties to female athletes emphasizing the importance of their development in the sport.

"We are proud to support our female athletes and coaches, ensuring they have access to the best training and competitive opportunities.

He said all expenses for this program would be covered by the Korean Cycling Federation and thanked President Korean Cycling Federation and Edward, Director of WCC-Korea, for consistently providing training opportunities for PCF cyclists and coaches over the past few years.

Hardik Pandya crowned top T20I all-rounder

ISLAMABAD (APP): Hardik Pandya's heroics in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup has seen him become the No.1 ranked all-rounder in the latest ICC Men's T20I Rankings update.

Pandya rose two places to go level with Sri Lankan star Wanindu Hasaranga as the top-ranked men's T20I all-rounder. The Indian all-rounder, who made a big contribution in the final with the crucial wickets of Heinrich Klaassen and David Miller, had a good tournament with bat and ball and becomes the first Indian man to reach No.1 in the category.

He made impactful cameos down the order with the bat and made breakthroughs with the ball when the team needed him to. He finished with 144 runs at a batting strike-rate of over 150 and

also took 11 wickets.

His most important performance, though, came in the final when his decisive blow - the wicket of Klaassen - with South Africa on top of the game swung the contest. Hardik went on to bowl the tense final over and defended 16 runs to help India win the T20 World Cup title.

There were other movements in the top 10 of the T20I all-rounder rankings, with Marcus Stoinis, Sikandar Raza, Shakib Al Hasan and Liam Livingstone rising up by one spot. Mohammad Nabi moved back by four spots to go out of the top five.

Among the men's T20I bowling rankings, Anrich Nortje rose up by seven places to a career-best second spot to go just behind top-ranked Adil Rashid with 675 rating points.

India's star fast bowler

Jasprit Bumrah, who won the Player of the Tournament award at the T20 World Cup, for his 15 wickets, moved up by 12 spots to go just outside the top ten, his highest position since the end of 2020.

Kuldeep Yadav entered the top ten of the bowling rankings, moving up by three spots to joint-eighth. Among other beneficiaries were Arshdeep Singh, who moved up by four spots to a career-best No.13 after topping the wickets chart at the T20 World Cup, and Tabraiz Shamsi, who moved up by five positions to reach the top 15.

There wasn't too much movement in the top ten of the batting rankings with one minor change in South Africa skipper Aiden Markram dropping down by two points after an ordinary tournament with the bat.



In brief

ANF seizes 6 kg drugs in 3 operations

RAWALPINDI (APP): Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) while conducting 3 operations managed to recover 6 kg drugs and arrested 5 accused, said an ANF Headquarters spokesman here Wednesday. He informed that 3 kg hashish was recovered from an accused rounded up near the main bus stop Jamshoro. 2 kg hashish was recovered from 3 accused arrested in Clifton Karachi and 1 kg heroin was recovered from the possession of a woman netted near Manawala stop Lahore. He said, separate cases have been registered against the accused while further investigations are under process.

Motorway Police returns two cell phones to a traveler

ISLAMABAD (APP): National Highway and Motorway Police (NHMP) officials found and handed over two lost mobile phones worth Rs 140,000 to its owner here on Wednesday. According to details, a traveler near Palian on the Swat motorway contacted Motorway police and said that during a stay at a petrol pump in a service area, he had forgotten to leave his mobile phones. The NHMP North zone officials took immediate action on his request and after tracing the lost phones handed it over to him. The traveler expressed his gratitude and admiration for the Motorway Police's honesty and dedication to their duty. Muhammad Saqib, the spokesperson for the Motorway Police, highlighted the significance of this incident as a reflection of the department's commitment to ensuring the safety and well-being of the public. The Motorway Police continues to earn public trust through such acts of integrity, underlining their repute as wardens of the motorways.

Bani police net two bike lifters

RAWALPINDI (APP): Police have arrested two bike lifters and recovered two mobile phones, three stolen motorcycles, Rs 14,000 cash, weapons and other items from their possession, said a Police spokesman here on Wednesday. He informed that a team under the supervision of SHO, Bani Police Station managed to net two bike lifters namely Wahdatullah and Balach and recovered two mobile phones, three stolen motorcycles, Rs 14,000 cash, weapons and other items from their possession. A case has been registered against the accused while further investigation is underway. Superintendent of Police, Rawal, Faisal Saleem said the accomplices and facilitators of the accused would also be sent behind bars.

Admin for providing facilities to tourists

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Murree administration is taking concrete steps to provide all kinds of exceptional and best facilities to the tourists' influx to with dignity to enjoy their trip at recreational spots in the area. The Deputy Commissioner Murree visited different parks and reviewed the arrangements made by the authorities concerned in provision to the public in terms of quality entertainment, an official source told APP on Wednesday. He said the cleanliness campaign has already been launched in various parks to ensure neat and clean ambience for better entertainment facilities for the tourists. A large number of local and foreign tourists are thronging to Murree to enjoy their day. The official said that the administration was also ensuring clean drinking water.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Italian Ambassador to Pakistan, H.E. Marilina Armellini at Parliament House. —APP Photo

U.S Embassy hosts reception to celebrate U.S National Day

ISLAMABAD (APP): U.S Embassy in Islamabad hosted a festive reception to celebrate the 248th anniversary of the independence of the United States of America.

Held under the theme of 'Made in the USA,' the event was an opportunity to underscore the enduring partnership between the United States and Pakistan and reaffirm the two nations' commitment to build a more prosperous future for their citizens.

Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Planning Development and Special Initiatives, graced the event as the chief guest.

The evening brought together distinguished guests from Pakistan's government, corporate sector, academia, civil society, and diplomatic community to commemorate the shared values of freedom, democracy, and economic prosperity between the United States and Pakistan.

The event was a vibrant occasion filled with American cultural elements, including music, food, and traditions that reflect the rich diversity

of the United States. A dazzling display of fireworks further enhanced the celebratory mood.

United States and Pakistan share a long history of partnership spanning multiple areas of cooperation. In the infrastructure and energy sectors, this collaboration is exemplified by several major dams constructed in Pakistan with U.S. support. In the private sector, dozens of U.S. companies employ hundreds of thousands of Pakistanis and provide critical research and development assets. Pakistan's education and health sectors are also strengthened through U.S. assistance. United States is proud to be Pakistan's largest export market; Pakistanis benefit tremendously from this trade relationship by supplying billions of dollars worth of exports to the U.S market annually.

Meanwhile, the U.S.-Pakistan "Green Alliance" Framework is a transformative initiative to strengthen Pakistan's climate resilience and support its efforts for clean energy

transformation.

In his remarks, U.S. Ambassador Donald Blome noted the promising trajectory of the bilateral relationship, saying: "While at times we have had to tackle great challenges – such as floods, war, a pandemic, economic setbacks – those of us who have worked together to strengthen this relationship have always recognized the partnership is, and has always been, part of a longer journey toward increased prosperity and security for our two nations, and that each step of this journey has been important."

The reception underscored the strength of the U.S.-Pakistan bilateral relationship, highlighting the shared commitment to deepening economic ties, promoting cultural exchange, and fostering collaboration in areas of mutual interest. As the United States celebrates its independence, the two countries pledged to continue working together to address shared challenges and seize opportunities for a brighter future.

Salik for promoting religious harmony ahead of Muharram

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Chaudhry Salik Hussain on Wednesday presided over a crucial meeting focused on promoting religious harmony and ensuring peace during Muharram-ul-Haram.

Addressing the meeting attended by prominent scholars and religious leaders from the twin cities of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, he emphasized their significant role in maintaining peace during Muharram-ul-Haram, as observed in previous years. Minister Salik highlighted that a joint strategy had been worked out in consultation with religious scholars to foster unity, brotherhood, and tolerance in the society.

He stressed the need for

similar meetings at provincial and district levels to strengthen sectarian harmony. He underscored the importance of the unity of scholars from all schools of thought in national and religious matters to maintain a peaceful environment.

During the meeting, a comprehensive code of conduct was announced by Secretary Religious Affairs, Zulfiqar Haider. He said all schools of thought would strive to foster an environment of love, tolerance, and mutual understanding.

He said respect for leaders of other sects would be upheld and scholars, speakers, and writers would ensure balance and moderation in their speeches and writings, avoiding inflammatory statements that could offend others.

Zulfiqar said sectarian disputes would be resolved through consultation, understanding, and serious dialogue and public platforms would not be used to criticize opponents. He said respect for the revered figures of Islam, including the Prophet's family, companions, and the saints, would be ensured.

He said any criticism of these figures was strictly prohibited and incidents of spreading religious hatred on social media could be reported to the following links/numbers: FIA Complaint <https://complaint.fia.gov.pk>; PTA Complaint <https://complaint.pta.gov.pk/RegisterComplaint.aspx>; or 0800 5505515.

Zulfiqar said scholars from all sects would remain

united and supportive in national matters and highlight the sacrifices of Palestinians and Kashmiris in the context of the Karbala incident, expressing solidarity and bringing their plight to the world's attention.

He said the federal government had appealed to provincial governments to hold similar meetings at provincial and district levels to maintain religious harmony during Muharram-ul-Haram nationwide.

Zulfiqar announced that a core committee, comprising representatives from all schools of thought, as well as officials from the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony and the Ministry of Interior, would be formed to ensure active coordination during the sacred month.

FC to assist police in Muharram: IG

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Inspector General Police (IGP) Islamabad reviewed various on going initiatives including the new recruitments, the welfare of police officers, the effective security arrangements for Muharram with the assistance of Frontier Constabulary, and the security measures taken through Safe City, and issued orders to the officers.

According to the details, Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi, chaired important meetings at the Central Police Office Islamabad.

The meetings were attended by DIG Headquarters Syed Mustafa Tanveer, DIG Security Muhammad Jawad Tariq, DG Safe City Malik Jamil Zafar, and other senior police officers. The senior police officers briefed IG Islamabad on the new recruitment process and the welfare of police officers. IG Islamabad reviewed the implementation of measures taken for new recruitments and the welfare of police officers. He also issued orders to complete the recruitment process with merit and transparency, to include educated youth in the police force, and to take further steps for the welfare of police officers.

Additionally, IG Islamabad chaired a meeting consisting of senior police officers to ensure effective security arrangements in the federal capital during Muharram-ul-Haram.

Power Ministry denounces fake bill propaganda against Awaais Leghari

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Power Division has condemned the attempt to tarnish the reputation of the Federal Minister Sardar Awaais Leghari through the circulation of a misleading electricity bill in his name on social media.

In a statement issued on Wednesday, the Ministry described this act as not only a blatant character assassination but also a manipulative tactic aimed at inciting public emotions. The Ministry clarified

that the bill in question was not merely part of a false propaganda campaign but also evidence of Sardar Awaais Ahmad Leghari's adherence to the law and commitment to his national duties.

The bill pertains to an upper section of Fort Monroe Hill station, which is owned by the minister but has not been in use. The meter was legally locked in August 2023, a fact indicated in the unit column of the bill. In December 2023, the con-

nection was legally disconnected after clearing all dues amounting to Rs. 10,766, as evidenced by the bill.

The meter was legally reconnected in June 2024, but no units have been consumed due to the lack of usage since then. The Ministry emphasized that the minister has always performed his national duties with dedication and hard work, providing daily services without accepting any salary or additional benefits.

CDA to launch 30 electric buses on Friday

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Capital Development Authority (CDA) is likely to launch the operation of 30 electric buses on different routes of the federal capital to facilitate the residents on July 5 (Friday).

"The buses had arrived in Islamabad last month which will be operational to mitigate the problems being faced by the travelers of the twin cities," official sources in the CDA told APP.

The sources said that the inauguration ceremony is likely to attend by senior dignitaries, officials of CDA and other relevant departments. Chairman CDA, Chaudhry Muhammad Ali Randhawa is not only putting maximum efforts to facilitate the residents of the federal capital by enhancing facilities but also beautifying the city

on modern lines.

They said that these buses would run on two routes including National University of Science and Technology (NUST) to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) and PIMS to Bari Imam.

The first route would start from NUST and end at PIMS after passing through G-11 Markaz, G-10 Markaz, G-9 Markaz, and G-8 Markaz, they added.

They said the second route would start from PIMS and conclude at Bari Imam after passing through G-7, G-6, Melody, Aabpara, Ataturk Road, Serena Hotel, Foreign Office, Radio Pakistan, and the Diplomatic Enclave.

The sources said that the authority has planned to run more buses in Islamabad as 70 more such vehicles are

expected to arrive in the capital city from Karachi. After manufacturing, 60 more buses will be on their way to Islamabad from China. On the other hand, they said that the remaining 130 buses would operate on 11 routes to connect rural and urban areas of the federal capital.

Initially, they said 30 buses would operate from the Convention Centre where the CDA has installed a charging station with six charging points. While, for 70 other buses, which are about to reach Islamabad from Karachi, they said the CDA has set up the facility at the H-9 metro depot.

The sources said that the CDA is also working on the construction of bus depots at three different places including at Zero Point, I-9, and Taramri.

NBF host DG Commercial Audit at its Head Office



F.P. Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Book Foundation (NBF) was honoured to host DG Commercial Audit, Usman Butt, at its Head Office in Islamabad today. During the visit, Mr Murad Ali Mohmand, the Secretary of NBF provided a detailed briefing on the Foundation's aims, objectives, functions, and mandate, showcasing the vital role NBF plays in promoting literacy and a culture of reading across Pakistan.

Mr. Butt's visit included a comprehensive tour of the NBF Book Museum, which houses a remarkable collection of rare and historical books. He also visited the

NBF Bookshop, known for its wide range of publications catering to diverse literary tastes and educational needs.

The Wall of Honour, dedicated to individuals who have made significant contributions to the literary world and the Indonesian Corner, featuring literature and cultural artifacts from Indonesia, were also part of the tour.

The Secretary of NBF highlighted the Foundation's status as a Federal Textbook Board, a role formalized through a notified SRO in 2010. This designation underscores NBF's commitment to ensuring the availability of quality textbooks and educational materials

throughout the country.

The Secretary also emphasized NBF's ongoing efforts to foster a robust reading culture and provide affordable books to all segments of society.

DG Usman Butt expressed his appreciation for NBF's contributions to the literary landscape of Pakistan. He commended the Foundation for its dedication to enhancing literacy rates and promoting a love of reading among the public.

He noted the significance of NBF's initiatives in supporting education and cultural exchange, particularly through the Indonesian Corner and other international collaborations.

Preparations finalized to prevent water-logging in city

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) administration has finalized all the arrangements needed for preventing water-logging in the city due to rain which will fall as a result of Monsoon.

"With the monsoon season approaching, the authorities in Islamabad are gearing up to ensure the city is prepared for the rains," said a news statement by the ICT administration.

The ICT administration shared a comprehensive plan in this regard which spelled out a series of activities that were aimed at keeping the city functioning smoothly.

"Firstly, the cleaning of drains has been completed as part of the pre-monsoon plan. Ongoing work in

various areas will soon be finished," it said, adding all the machinery needed for cleaning the city during the monsoon "is ready to go".

The ICT administration said equipment had been distributed to both urban and rural areas, with a particular focus on residential zones. "Should there be heavy rainfall, standard operating procedures (SOPs) will be enacted in all these areas."

According to the local administration, rescue teams equipped with de-watering sets would be on standby during the rains.

"In case of water accumulation, especially in basements, residents can call emergency numbers 15 or 16," it said, adding the teams would respond promptly to any standing

water issues.

"Areas that experienced significant water logging last year are under close watch," the administration stressed.

It said meetings were held with all relevant departments to prepare for potential issues. Special attention was being given to E-11, which faced severe water problems last year.

The Capital Development Authority's (CDA) environmental wing would be actively monitoring the situation on the roads. Immediate action would be taken if any trees fall during the rains.

"These measures are aimed at minimizing disruptions and ensuring a swift response to any emergencies during the monsoon season," it noted.

2 Afghan citizens executed

KABUL (Khaama Press): An Iranian human rights organization known as “Hengaw” has reported that two Afghan citizens imprisoned in Iran on drug-related charges have been executed. The organization disclosed this on Tuesday, July 2nd, by publishing a report on the executions of these Afghan citizens in Shiraz Central Prisons. The report identified the individuals as Ali Allah Bakhsh and Afzal Allah Bakhsh, who were executed.

The Frontier Post

Zil-Hajj 27 1445 — Thursday, July 04, 2024

Minister meets Governor

KABUL (BNA): The Acting Minister of Information and Culture, Mullah Khairullah Khairkhwa, met with Mawlawi Ahmad Shah Din Dost, the Governor of Ghor, to discuss issues related to archaeological sites, the construction of a library, and the historic Minaret of Jam. According to Bakhtar News Agency, the Governor of Ghor emphasized the importance of archaeological sites, historical buildings, and the establishment of a standard library and museum in the province.

Mujahid described Doha meeting as beneficial step

KABUL (BNA): Upon returning from the Doha meeting, Islamic Emirate spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid addressed journalists at the Government Information and Media Center, discussing the outcomes of the meeting and answering their questions. Mujahid described the Doha meeting as a beneficial step for Afghanistan, stating that the opportunity was used to clearly share the problems and demands of the Afghan people with the international community. He emphasized that the Afghan delegation made it clear to the world that humanitarian issues should be separated from politics, as these matters have a direct impact on the daily lives of Afghans. In response to a ques-

tion, Mujahid stated that the Islamic Emirate would not allow Afghanistan to become a battleground for international political competitions. Instead, the goal is to serve as a connecting point and economic corridor between nations. He further noted that the Islamic Emirate's delegation called for the release of Afghanistan's frozen funds during the Doha meeting, which received strong support from several participants, including Russia, China, Iran, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. Mujahid expressed hope that the international community would honor the commitments made to Afghanistan during the Doha meeting. He assured that the positive interaction between the Islamic Emi-

rate and the world is improving daily. Participants were informed that Afghanistan is no longer isolated and that the Islamic Emirate's achievements in combating drug trafficking, eliminating corruption, and ensuring comprehensive security cannot be ignored. He added that, aside from the main Doha meeting, the delegation held around 24 side meetings with representatives from various countries, who emphasized the expansion of good and mutually beneficial relations with Afghanistan. It is noteworthy that the third Doha meeting on Afghanistan was convened by the United Nations, with the Islamic Emirate's delegation led by Zabihullah Mujahid representing Afghanistan.

Providing education opportunities for dozens of deaf girls

HERAT (TOLONews): A deaf girl in Herat has created educational opportunities for dozens of other deaf girls and boys. Neither she nor her students can speak, so they communicate using sign language. Roqia Ahmadi, 24, lost her hearing due to illness when she was two years old and was deprived of education in the eleventh grade. She says, “When schools were open before, I was very happy and studied; but now I teach my students, paint in my free time, and also sew.” Ahmadi teaches the Quran, Persian language, and mathematics to nine deaf girls and boys. Mariza Ahmadi, Roqia's mother, says, “I am proud of my daughter and happy that she is active. She is not dependent on others, is a teacher herself, does her own work, and teaches at the disabled people's institute.” Ali Reza Rasouli, the head of the Disabled Association in Jebriel Town, Herat, says, “Ms. Ahmadi is one of our competent teachers and has been working with us for nearly five years. She has taught sign language to many students.” After being deprived of education, Roqia learned painting and sewing. This deaf girl strives to give hope to other deaf girls and boys.

Afghanistan and Uzbekistan agree to establish joint COC



KABUL (Ariana News): Afghanistan's Acting Minister of Commerce and Industry Nooruddin Azizi and Uzbekistan officials have agreed to establish a joint chamber of commerce between the two countries. Also in the meeting were Uzbekistan's minister of

investment, industry and trade; the ministers of transport, mining and water resources, along with customs officials and others. The expansion of trade and transit was discussed in this meeting; the balancing of trade between the two

countries including a preferential trade agreement in favor of Afghanistan; finalizing investment and transit agreements; issues around the developing railway sector between the two countries and the Surkhan-Pul-Khumri power line.

Nimroz workers protest border restrictions



NIMROZ (TOLONews): Workers who trade on both sides of the Rah-Abrisham (Silk Bridge) in Nimroz, at the border with Iran, protested in front of the provincial governor's office. The protesters say that for the past three days, local government officials have prevented their movement across the border, forcing them to protest. These individuals, holding Iranian business visas, purchase certain commercial goods from the other side of the Rah-Abrisham

and bring them to Nimroz without paying customs duties, then sell them. One protester, Abdul Hakim, said: “We ask the governor to cooperate with us, and we will cooperate with him; if he tells us not to import something, we won't import it.” Another protester, Sardar Wali, said: “We transfer goods worth five thousand Afghanis; what will be the customs duty for this amount?” Abdul Khaliq, another protester, said: “Our request to the authorities is

that we, seven hundred people, work at this border, each person has borrowed up to seventy thousand Afghanis, and we are all poor people, our leaders should hear our voice.” Meanwhile, local officials in Nimroz say that these individuals import and sell low-quality and expired commercial goods from Iran. Hamed Ibrahim, the head of the Nimroz governor's office, said: “Most of the goods they import are low-quality, have uncertain expiry dates, and are expired.” According to statistics, at least more than 300 people are engaged in the trade of commercial goods on both sides of the Rah-Abrisham. Traders say that the activities of these individuals have caused congestion on the Rah-Abrisham. Meanwhile, the local administration in Nimroz has allowed them to import their family's necessities.

UNICEF to reconstruct 190 schools

KABUL (Khaama Press): The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) says it plans to reconstruct 190 schools in Afghanistan this year. The organization announced that rebuilding these schools will provide education opportunities for 200,000 children. UNICEF emphasized that these schools will be constructed with the cooperation and financial support of the European Union to ensure education for 200,000 children in Afghanistan. Earlier, UNICEF reported funding the construction of six schools in Pul-e-Alam city and Mohammad Agha district of Logar province. UNICEF further underscored its commitment to investing in the education sector in Afghanistan, stating in a report, “Investing in education is investing in the future of the country.” According to the organization's statistics, more than one million girls in Afghanistan are deprived of their right to education and have banned education beyond sixth grade for girls since the Taliban took power in the country. This is despite the lack of standard school buildings and educational facilities being highlighted as a major challenge in the education sector across various provinces, especially in rural areas. Amid a dire humanitarian crisis and widespread poverty in Afghanistan, there has been a troubling rise in forced marriages and underage unions, particularly affecting girls. The underlying reasons behind this alarming trend include pervasive poverty and the long-standing barriers to girls' education in the country. The lack of educational opportunities for girls has exacerbated societal challenges, contributing to a situation where many families see marriage as a coping mechanism amid economic hardship.

Coordinated, integrated strategies needs for Afghanistan's challenges

KABUL (TOLONews): Tariq Ali Bakhit, the Special Representative of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for Afghanistan, has called creating a strategic and coherent solution to solve Afghanistan's challenges. Bakhit said at the third Doha meeting that achieving this goal requires engaging continuously and constructively with the existing authorities in the country. The Organization of Islamic Cooperation said that the organization is continuing its discussions with officials of the Islamic Emirate regarding women's rights to education and work. A statement of this organization said there is

an “urgent need to adopt a coordinated and integrated strategic approach to deal with the many challenges facing Afghanistan and its people, stressing that the way to achieve this goal is to engage continuously and constructively with the existing authorities in the country.” Hamdullah Fitrat, the Deputy Spokesperson for the Islamic Emirate, says that if countries want to solve their challenges with Afghanistan, they should interact with the interim government. According to Fitrat, currently, the Islamic Emirate has good relations and positive interactions with most countries. The Deputy Spokesperson of the

Islamic Emirate said: “If the countries of the world want to solve their challenges with Afghanistan, they should come forward to interact with the Islamic Emirate, and in this field, most countries understand this fact and interact with the Islamic Emirate at a high level.” Several political experts said that the Islamic Emirate should take a series of actions for greater interaction and recognition by the international community. “It is better to interact with Afghanistan, and this interaction does not mean that it is only with the government, but interaction will make it easier for the government and the people of Afghanistan,” said

Sayed Akbar Agha, a political analyst. Nasser Shafiq, another political analyst, said: “Our foreign policy must be neutral and maintain the balance of the interests of the countries of the region and the world, and in domestic politics, we must ensure the creation of national unity for both the region and the international community by maintaining diversity.” Earlier, the Islamic Emirate said that the caretaker government has embassies and representative offices in about 38 countries, and more countries and organizations have opened their embassies and representative offices in Afghanistan.

Substantial investment opportunities highlighted



KABUL (BNA): In a recent meeting with the Russian partners of Afghan Petrol Group, Sheikh Shahabuddin Delawar, the Acting Minister of Mines and Petroleum, highlighted the substantial investment opportunities in Afghanistan's mining sector. He emphasized the significant potential in the oil and gas industries, particularly given the improved security conditions in the country.

According to a press release from the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Sheikh Al-Hadith Shahabuddin Delawar met with representatives from Afghan Petrol Group and their Russian partners in his office. In the meeting, both sides discussed the various investment opportunities available in Afghanistan's mineral resources, especially in the oil and gas sectors. The Acting Minister

Delawar highlighted that the improved security situation in Afghanistan has created numerous opportunities for investment in the mining sector. At the end of the meeting, the Russian partners of Afghan Petrol Group expressed their satisfaction with the ministry's commitments and cooperation, showing a keen interest in investing in Afghanistan's oil and gas resources.

Female teachers alarmed by salary delays and cuts

KABUL (TOLONews): Several female teachers in the capital have voiced their concerns regarding delays and reductions in their salaries by the Ministry of Education. These educators call on the Islamic Emirate to reconsider the decision to cut their pay. The concerns were sparked by a letter, purportedly signed by the acting Minister of Education, circulating in the media. The letter requested the Ministry of Finance to halt the payment of female teachers' salaries until a decision to reduce their pay to 5,000 afghani is finalized. However, the Islamic Emirate has yet to confirm the authenticity of this letter. Razia, who has dedicated over 18 years to serving in the education sector and supports a family of seven, told TOLONews that she used to spend more than 5,000 of her 9,000 Afghani salary on rent and utility bills, and now she is extremely worried. “Our request to the Islamic Emirate government is not to reduce the salaries of teachers who are



currently working and doctors who are working in hospitals. In these past two or three years, we have managed to stand on our own feet. If our salaries are reduced further, it will cause us significant problems,” she added. Other female teachers have also expressed concerns about the reduction and suspension of their salaries by the interim government, saying they are currently facing serious

economic challenges. Jamila, another female teacher, said: “Our request to the Islamic Emirate is that despite all the difficulties, we have continued to work and serve the nation's children. We have managed to live with the salaries we received, despite many challenges. Our request is that if our salaries cannot be increased, at least they should not be reduced.” Tahira, another teacher,

said: “I hope the news is not true, and that they change their decision. We should remain with our previous salaries. If they can increase our benefits, that would be great, but they should not reduce them.” Although the presence of female employees in some government departments has been banned since the Islamic Emirate regained power in Afghanistan, their salaries are still being paid by the government.

Traffic incidents in four provinces leave 25 dead, hurt

KABUL (Khaama Press): Local officials in Helmand, Parwan, Maidan Wardak, and Laghman provinces report that 25 people, including children and women, were killed or injured in several traffic accidents. A spokesperson for the Laghman police stated that at 12:00 PM, two Rickshaws collided with two motorcycles in the Sarakhan and Kakah Shahrah area of the No. 7 highway in Laghman province, resulting in 12 injuries, including two seriously wounded. In another incident on

the transit road of Balkh district, two motorcycles collided, resulting in one fatality and three others injured. One person was killed in the Tanke Tila Babar area of Bagram district, Parwan province, as a Corolla car collided with a vehicle while attempting to cross from the southbound to the northbound lane. Meanwhile, local officials in Helmand province report that in a traffic incident in Musa Qala district, one child died, and six others, including women, lost

their lives. Local authorities in Maidan Wardak province state that as a result of another traffic incident in Saydabad district, Maidan Wardak province, an 11-year-old child lost their life. Traffic accidents in the country have recently seen a significant increase. Meanwhile, these tragic incidents underscore the urgent need for enhanced road safety measures and public awareness campaigns to prevent further loss of life on Afghan roads.

Over 3,000 Afghan migrants return from Iran and Pakistan, says Afghan Ministry

KABUL (Khaama Press): The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation of Afghanistan has announced the return of 3,255 Afghan migrants from Iran and Pakistan voluntarily and involuntarily. In a statement posted on its social media platform X, the ministry stated that these individuals entered the country on Tuesday,

July 2nd, through the border crossings of Islam Qala in Nimruz province, Spin Boldak in Kandahar province, and Torkham in Nangarhar province. According to the Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, 85 families comprising 428 individuals returned from Torkham, 86 families comprising 480 individuals from Spin

Boldak in Pakistan, and 2,347 individuals from Iran through the Islam Qala border crossing in Nimruz province. According to reports, several returnees have been referred to the International Organization for Migration (IOM) offices for assistance. It is worth mentioning that the expulsion process

of Afghan migrants from Iran and Pakistan continues amidst international reactions. The Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation also reported the return of 2,450 Afghan migrants from Iran and Pakistan. According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs

(OCHA), approximately 595,000 Afghan migrants have returned from Iran and Pakistan from January to the end of May 2024. This comes amid a dire humanitarian crisis and a lack of amenities, exacerbating challenges for returning Afghan migrants seeking basic necessities and essential support.



ISLAMABAD: Group Chief Executive of Standard Chartered Bank, Mr. Bill Winters, called on President Asif Ali Zardari, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Heavy fighting rocks Gaza City

GAZA STRIP, Palestinian Territories (AFP): Israeli forces bombed and battled Hamas in Gaza City on Wednesday as tens of thousands of Palestinians scrambled for a safe haven after the army issued an evacuation order for a vast swathe in the territory's south.

Apache helicopters and Israeli quadcopter drones flew above Gaza City's Shujaiya district as heavy gunfire echoed through the streets, said AFP reporters. Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu rejected a US media report saying his generals were urging a Gaza truce even with Hamas undefeated, stressing on Tuesday that "this will not happen." Military chief Herzi Halevi meanwhile said Israel is engaged in "a long campaign" to destroy Hamas over the October 7 attack and to bring home the hostages held by Palestinian militants.

The United Nations warned that the almost nine-months-old war had "unleashed a maelstrom of human misery" and that the latest evacuation order had plunged yet more Palestinians into "an abyss of suffering." Ten days after Netanyahu said the war's "intense phase" was winding down, the Israeli military again rained down air strikes and artillery fire

on militants in the Shujaiya district.

The air force struck "over 50 target infrastructure sites" across Gaza in 24 hours while ground troops "eliminated terrorists," located tunnels and found weapons including AK-47 assault rifles, the military said. The Israeli army — which issued an evacuation order for Shujaiya a week ago — on Sunday did the same for a larger area near Khan Yunis and Rafah in the south, raising fears of renewed heavy battles there. Tens of thousands of Palestinians have again taken to the road there, many bundling their scant belongings on top of cars or donkey carts as they sought safety elsewhere in the bombed-out wasteland.

The UN agency supporting Palestinian refugees, UNRWA, said 250,000 people had been impacted by the latest evacuation order that covers southern areas bordering Israel and Egypt. UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres's spokesman Stephane Dujarric said the order covers 117 square kilometers (45 square miles), or "about a third of the Gaza Strip, making it the largest such order since October." The UN humanitarian coordinator for Gaza, Sigrid Kaag, told the UN Security Council in New York on Tuesday that the war had

now displaced 80 percent of Gaza's population.

She also said not enough aid was reaching the besieged territory and that crossings must be reopened, particularly to southern Gaza, to avert a humanitarian disaster. "Palestinian civilians in Gaza have been plunged into an abyss of suffering, their home lives shattered, their lives upended," she said. "The war has not merely created the most profound of humanitarian crises. It has unleashed a maelstrom of human misery." Amid the war, siege and mass displacement, more than 150,000 people have contracted skin diseases in the squalid conditions, said the World Health Organization.

Wafaa Elwan, a Palestinian mother of seven who now lives in a tent city by the sea, said: "We sleep on the ground, on sand where worms come out underneath us." She said her five-year-old son, much of whose body was covered in rashes and welts, "can't sleep through the night because he can't stop scratching his body." The bloodiest ever Gaza war broke out after Hamas's October 7 attack on southern Israel resulted in the deaths of 1,195 people, mostly civilians, according to an AFP tally based on Israeli figures.

KP govt replaces Secy Health Syed Adnan

PESHAWAR: In a significant administrative shake-up, the provincial government has removed Mahmood Aslam from his position as Health Secretary. In his place, Adil Shah has been appointed as the new Health Secretary. Adil Shah is widely regarded as a highly capable and diligent administrative officer with a robust track record. He previously held the position of Secretary of Excise, where he earned a reputation for his strong work ethic and effective management skills.

The decision to replace Mahmood Aslam comes against the backdrop of serious challenges within the health department. Over the past year, numerous incidents of corruption have been reported, with several high-profile inquiries currently underway. This situation has put immense pressure on the provincial government to take decisive action.

Adil Shah steps into his new role facing substantial challenges. The health department is under intense scrutiny, and there is a pressing need for swift and comprehensive reforms to address the ongoing inquiries. Shah's appointment is seen as a move to bring about much-needed change and to restore public trust in the department. His reputation as a results-oriented officer will be put to the test as he navigates the complexities of his new position.

A senior official within the health department stated that the new Secretary is expected to operate with merit and fairness, and to sideline the entrenched mafia within the department. "There is a mafia present in the health department that has held positions for many years and has never been removed by any Secretary," the official said. Adil Shah's tenure as Secretary of Excise demonstrated his ability to manage large administrative units and implement effective policies. His experience will be crucial as he tackles the systemic issues plaguing the health department. Shah is expected to prioritize transparency, accountability, and efficiency, focusing on eradicating corruption and improving the delivery of health services.

As Adil Shah takes on the role of Health Secretary, all eyes will be on his efforts to reform the department and address the serious issues that have come to light. His success or failure in this endeavor will have significant implications for the provincial government and the health sector at large. The coming months will be critical in determining whether this change in leadership can bring about the desired improvements and restore faith in the health department.

PM invites Tajikistan to use Karachi Port for transit trade

DUSHANBE (APP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday invited Tajikistan to use Karachi Port for the transit trade besides emphasising the promotion of regional connectivity by constructing rail tracks and roads between the two countries

The bilateral relations were discussed in a bilateral meeting between Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and his Tajik counterpart Qohir Rasulzoda here. The prime minister is on a two-day official visit to Tajikistan at the invitation of the President of Tajikistan Emomali Rahmon.

The two leaders expressed satisfaction over the steadily expanding bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest and reaffirmed their shared desire to further strengthen the existing fraternal ties. Prime Minister Shehbaz congratulated the Tajik prime minister on the successful organization of the 3rd High-Level Water Conference and appreciated Tajikistan's leading role in water diplomacy.

Hailing the signing of the Strategic Partnership Agreement as a historic moment in bilateral ties between Pakistan and Tajikistan, the prime minister expressed the hope that this elevation of the relationship between the two countries would open up new areas of mutually beneficial economic cooperation. Prime Minister Shehbaz underlined that Pakistan

would continue to pursue enhanced engagement with Central Asian countries, including Tajikistan, in line with its "Vision Central Asia" policy. He also stressed that enhanced regional connectivity and integration would remain key components for sustainable long-term socio-economic development of the region.

Emphasising the importance of regional ties in the South Asian and Central Asian region, the prime minister suggested that Pakistan host a regional connectivity summit to provide trade corridors to Central Asian countries and promote regional trade. The prime minister welcomed the recent start of international flights between Pakistan and Tajikistan and emphasised increasing the number of flights. He said that religious and cultural values were common between the Tajik and Pakistani people and called for further expansion of social relations between the two countries. Prime Minister Shehbaz also reiterated the need for enhanced cooperation in culture, education, sports, and people-to-people contacts.

PM, Uzbek President reaffirm commitment to multifaceted relations between two countries: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev on Wednesday reaffirmed commitment to the multifaceted relations between the two countries and expanding of

mutually beneficial cooperation in trade, connectivity, defence, security, culture and people to people contacts.

The two leaders expressed confidence that operationalization of the Preferential Trade Agreement and Pakistan-Uzbekistan Transit Trade Agreement would further enhance bilateral trade and economic relations. The prime minister met with the Uzbek president on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) Summit being held in Kazakhstan, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Recognizing the importance of Uzbekistan as a transit point for trade expansion for other countries, the two leaders agreed to focus on this particular area and to this end initiate an examination of the various options available. The Karachi Port's connectivity to Tirmez was also discussed to enhance trade between the two countries.

Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed Pakistan's eagerness to see a prosperous Central Asia and enhanced regional connectivity. The two leaders also discussed the situation in Afghanistan and the common interest of both Pakistan and Uzbekistan for a peaceful and stable Afghanistan which could be a partner in the development and prosperity of the region. The early realization of Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project was also discussed.

Cancellation of Shandur polo festival PHC orders CS, Secy Tourism to respond

Humayun Khan

PESHAWAR: Peshawar High Court (PHC) ordered Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Secretary Tourism for submission reply against cancellation of Shandur Polo Festival at the world's highest polo ground which was cancelled due to alleged weather concerns, on Wednesday.

The petitioner's counsel Sher Haider Khan advocate argued that the cancellation of Shandur Polo Festival is unjustified. The counsel stated that all preparations for the festival were complete, and players had

arrived with their horses, only to be told that the festival was cancelled.

The counsel emphasized that the weather conditions were not unusual for the region and that the festival had been held every year despite similar weather conditions. He also pointed out that the government had not consulted with the Gilgit-Baltistan government, which was a necessary step, and that the cancellation had caused significant financial losses to the players, most of whom belong to the middle class. The counsel requested the court to declare the cancellation as unconstitutional and order the government to restore the festival.

PHC divisional bench comprising Justice Naeem Anwar and Justice Shahid Khan directed the Chief Secretary and Secretary Tourism to respond to the petition within a week. It is worthy to mention that the Shandur Polo Festival is a significant event in the region, promoting tourism and cultural exchange between Chitral and Gilgit-Baltistan. The cancellation has caused widespread disappointment and anger among the players, organizers, and local communities.

ATC orders IO to record statement in 9th May case

F.P. Report

PESHAWAR: Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) Peshawar adjourned the hearing of a case against 115 Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) workers till today (Thursday) involved in vandalism after arrest of Imran Khan on 9th May 2023 and to record investigation officer statement, on Wednesday.

The case was registered against the defendants for their involvement in violent

protests on May 9, which resulted in damage to public and private property, including the VIP gate of the Bala Hissar Fort.

Four witnesses testified in court yesterday, and their statements were recorded. The investigation officer's statement will be recorded today. The defendants, including provincial ministers including Meena Khan and MPAs Fazal Elahi along with others are accused of vandalizing

property and causing damage to national assets during the protests.

The prosecution alleges that the defendants engaged in violent acts, including damaging the VIP gate of the Bala Hissar Fort, and causing harm to public and private property, including banks and other government and private assets. The police have completed their investigation and submitted a challan in the ATC court, which has started the trial.



KARACHI: Police trying to stop teachers from entering into Sindh Assembly during a protest.

Biden pulls even with Trump

WASHINGTON (Reuters): US President Joe Biden pulled even with his Republican challenger Donald Trump this week in the race to win the November election, a sign the contest remains close even after a widely panned debate performance by the Democrat, according to a new Reuters/Ipsos poll. Biden and Trump each had 40% support among registered voters in the two-day poll that concluded on Tuesday. A prior Reuters/Ipsos poll conducted June 11-12 showed Trump with a marginal 2 percentage point lead, 41% to 39%.

The two faced off in a televised debate last Thursday, where Biden stammered throughout and failed to challenge Trump's attacks. The new Reuters/Ipsos poll also showed that, following the debate, about one-in-three Democrats think Biden should drop out of the race, something he has pledged not to do.

The poll, which gathered responses online and nationwide from 1,070 US adults, had a 3.5 percentage point margin of error for registered voters, many of whom remain on the fence with about four months left before the Nov. 5 election. One in five registered voters said that they weren't sure for whom to vote, that they would pick a different candidate or that they would not vote at all.

The latest poll did not include a question on support for independent candidate Robert Kennedy Jr. The June poll found that 10% of registered voters would back him if he appeared on the ballot.

While nationwide surveys give important signals on American support for political candidates, just a handful of competitive states typically tilt the balance in the US Electoral College, which ultimately decides who wins a presidential election.

Both candidates carry significant liabilities. For Biden, these include concerns about his age - 81 - that were magnified by his debate performance. The latest Reuters/Ipsos poll found that 83% of Democrats and 97% of Republicans agreed with a statement that in the debate, "Biden stumbled and appeared to show his age." Only 58% of Democrats and 11% of Republicans had the same assessment of Trump's debate performance.

Shehbaz, Putin agree to boost trade, relations

(Continued from Page 1)

It was agreed that completion of the project would open new avenues for future energy corridors, leading to prosperity for the two sides and the whole region. Recognizing the significance of the Pakistan-Tajikistan Joint Commission on Trade, Economic, and Scientific-Technical Cooperation, both parties expressed their preparedness to convene the 7th Session of the Joint Commission in Islamabad at the earliest opportunity.

The President of Tajikistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan inked the Strategic Partnership Agreement between the Republic of Tajikistan and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. This agreement symbolizes the deepening mutual trust and partnership between the two nations, opening new avenues for advancing bilateral cooperation. "The Pakistan Prime Minister also expressed support for Tajikistan's initiative to establish the SCO Anti-Drug Centre in Dushanbe," said the joint statement.

The two sides reviewed the existing inter-parliamentary cooperation between the two countries. The two leaders underscored the importance of Tajikistan-Pakistan Parliamentary Friendship Groups in the respective parliaments and supported increasing frequency of parliamentary delegations' visits to boost productive inter-parliamentary cooperation.

Noting the current level of bilateral trade, it was underlined that there is a vast potential that needs to be tapped through mutual efforts. Accordingly, the two sides agreed to increase bilateral economic ties by exploring new avenues, opportunities and ventures. The two leaders commended the excellent bilateral cooperation at the multilateral forums including the UN, SCO, OIC, ECO and CICA. It was agreed to further enhance multilateral cooperation for global and regional peace, stability and sustainable development.

The two sides highlighted the need to enhance business-to-business ties through the exchange of business del-

egations, organization of business forums/exhibitions and scheduling meetings of the Tajikistan-Pakistan Joint Business Council. Prime Minister Shehbaz underlined the significance of collaboration with Tajikistan within Pakistan's "Vision Central Asia" policy framework. This policy is structured around five key areas of bilateral cooperation: political relations, trade and investment, energy and connectivity, security and defence, and people-to-people exchanges.

The prime minister also reaffirmed Pakistan's backing for Tajikistan's accession to the Quadrilateral Traffic in Transit Agreement (QTTA). The President of Tajikistan had a tete-a-tete meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz, which was followed by delegation level talks. During the meetings, the two sides exchanged views on further strengthening of the multifaceted cooperation between Tajikistan and Pakistan.

During the visit, the Chairman of the Tajik Parliament - Majlisi Namoyandagon Majlisi Oli of the

Republic of Tajikistan - Zokirzoda Mahmadoir Zoir and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan Qohir Rasulzoda also called on Prime Minister Shehbaz. In the delegation level talks, the two leaders discussed a range of bilateral issues as well as exchanged views on regional and international developments.

Shehbaz Sharif supported nomination of the Republic of Tajikistan as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2028-2029 and appreciated Tajikistan's valuable support for Pakistan's candidature to the same body for the term 2025-26. The prime minister highly appreciated Tajikistan's leadership role in Water Diplomacy and congratulated the President of Tajikistan for successful organization of international events including the UN 2023 Water Conference in New York by Tajikistan and Netherlands in March 2023, and the 3rd Dushanbe Water Action Decade Conference on June 10-13, 2024 in Dushanbe.

He also commended the initiative

of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan to declare 2025 as the International Year of Glacier Conservation and the establishment of the International Foundation for The Protection of Glaciers, and welcomed the adoption of the relevant United Nations General Assembly resolution.

The progress achieved by existing Joint Working Groups (JWGs) in various fields, including trade, investment, transport, energy, culture and tourism, was noted by the two leaders; and regular interactions of these JWGs were encouraged by the two sides. The prime minister informed the Tajik President about the operationalization of Gwadar seaport and offered Tajikistan the opportunity to avail the facilities of Pakistani seaports.

It was highlighted that the Pakistani seaports offer the most efficient, shortest and economic route for the Central Asian countries including Tajikistan to the markets in Middle East and beyond. The two sides also noted the progress in operationalizing the Agreement on Transit Trade which

was signed during the visit of the Tajik President to Pakistan in December 2022.

Prime Minister Shehbaz highlighted CPEC as a linchpin of Pakistan's connectivity with the region and the major plank of its future development. He mentioned how the first phase of CPEC helped Pakistan lay a robust infrastructure network, whereas Phase-II is focused on infrastructure development, green development, ICT, industrialization and agriculture modernization.

Underlying the expertise and capacities of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan in investment and technology, the Tajik President welcomed Pakistani entrepreneurs and business community to contribute to bilateral economic ties of the two countries by investing in free economic zones of Tajikistan. Cooperation in the fields of counter-terrorism and security was given particular attention by the leaders of Tajikistan and Pakistan and they welcomed the gradual development of bilateral cooperation in this field.